

## ECONOMY, ENERGY & TRENDS

### Consortium considers 11 transmission routes for pilot project

A University of Maine-led consortium is considering 11 potential routes for the transmission cable that would connect its Maine Aqua Ventus floating offshore wind pilot project to the mainland, said the university's vice president for innovation and economic development, Jake Ward. "We continue to work with fishermen, communities and regulators to find an optimum cable route," he said, adding that the team has nixed a route running into the village of Port Clyde.

[Bangor Daily News \(Maine\) \(free registration\)](#) (1/19)



### Opinion: Energy choice would open door to Ohio wind, solar

The Buckeye Institute supports a free choice energy system for Ohio in which residents can choose wind, solar and other energy sources, allowing for market competition and a reduced regulatory environment, writes Research Fellow Greg Lawson. "Ohio should open its doors to clean energy by encouraging choice and competition, rolling back restrictive regulations, and eliminating subsidies to any energy company," he writes.

[The Plain Dealer \(Cleveland\)](#) (1/19) = A



### Tri Global added 1 GW installed wind capacity in 2017

Tri Global Energy developed five wind farms in Texas with a collective installed capacity of more than 1 gigawatt in 2017, setting a new record for the nine-year-old firm, according to the company. "Wind energy has quickly become a formidable competitor as transmission capacity and markets reform to accommodate greater usage," said Chairman and CEO John Billingsley.

= A [North American Windpower online](#) (1/19)



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## POLICY WATCH

## **Government shutdown to end after Senate deal reached**

The Senate voted today to end the federal government shutdown, moving toward the passage of a spending bill that would ensure the government is open through Feb. 8. Senate Democrats agreed to reopen the government after Republican leadership pledged to tackle legislation pertaining to undocumented immigrants.

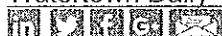
[The New York Times \(free-article access for SmartBrief readers\) \(1/22\)](#)



## **Proposed bill threatens wind development near N.Y.'s Fort Drum**

New York Assemblywoman Addie Jenne introduced a bill on Friday that would prevent wind farms located within 10 miles of certain airfields from qualifying for state support mechanisms. At least two projects proposed for the area -- Apex Clean Energy's Galloo Island Wind farm and Avangrid Renewables' North Ridge project -- fall outside the boundary area outlined in the bill.

[Watertown Daily Times \(N.Y.\) \(1/21\)](#)



## **AWEA NEWS**

### **People are really excited about the responses to Xcel Energy's Colo. RFP**

At first blush, responses to a utility RFP for new capacity might not be the sort of news that sets the world on fire. But energy wonks are downright ecstatic over the results to Xcel Energy's recent Colorado solicitation. Xcel received over 400 bids in response to its all-energy-source RFP, and wind power led the way by a significant margin, clocking the lowest median bid of \$18.10 per megawatt hour. [Read more.](#)



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*History is made by people: Its movement depends on small currents as well as great tides.*

Margaret Thatcher,  
prime minister



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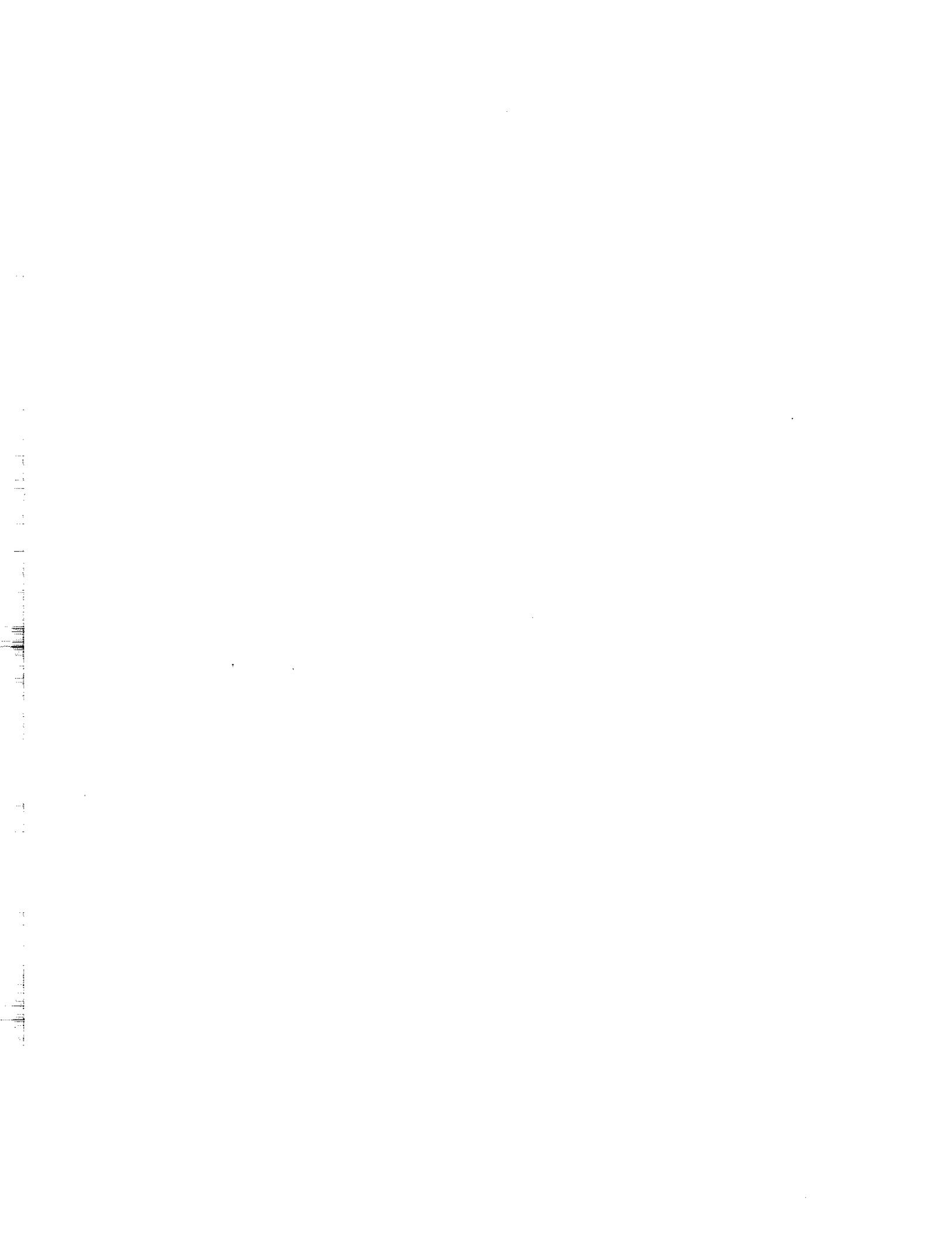
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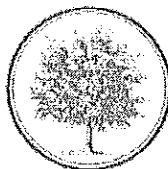


**From:** The Buckeye Institute  
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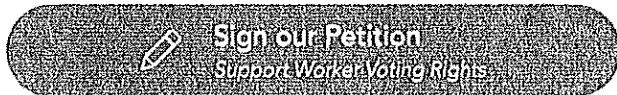
You may have heard rumors that your Buckeye Institute has launched a transformational comprehensive effort to give Ohio's public employees a real voice and choice through our campaign: **Worker Voting Rights!** We are happy to confirm the rumors are true. Check out the website and [sign on as a supporter today](#).

As our president and CEO Robert Alt recently pointed out, "Every morning, hardworking men and women go to work on our behalf--they teach our children, take care of the sick and elderly, repair our roads, and issue our driver licenses. While these people go to work for us, far too few of them have ever had a voice or a choice or a vote on the unions that represent them."

Buckeye is spearheading a statewide campaign to change that, but we need your help.

We are speaking up for the rights of public employees to have a vote on the union that represents them. Our goal is to bring democracy and accountability to public-sector unions in Ohio and to ensure they listen to their members and provide fair options to them. Not surprisingly, 82% of unionized Americans **favor holding periodic votes on their union representation**.

Now is the time when you can show your support for Worker Voting Rights by signing our petition today!



By including your name, you will show that you stand alongside public employees asking for the right to vote on which union represents them. You will help give public employees the voice and the choice they deserve.

Next time you are driving down 315 South into Columbus, look for our new billboard between the Ackerman and Lane Avenue exits. And the next time you are walking around the Statehouse and Capitol Square in Columbus, look for our newspaper rack signs at the corner of Third and East Broad and at the corner of High and State.



Billboard on State Route 315 South.



Newspaper rack sign at the corner of Third and East Broad streets.



Newspaper rack sign at the corner of State and High streets.

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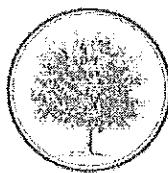
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Contact: Lisa Gates, Vice President of Comms  
(614) 224-3255 or [Lisa@BuckeyeInstitute.org](mailto:Lisa@BuckeyeInstitute.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
February 8, 2018

### The Buckeye Institute Calls for the Protection of Taxpayers and Free Speech

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**Columbus, OH --** The Buckeye Institute has joined a coalition of more than 100 organizations calling on Congress to protect taxpayers and their First Amendment rights to confidentially give to charitable organizations without the fear of intimidation (**Read the letter here**).

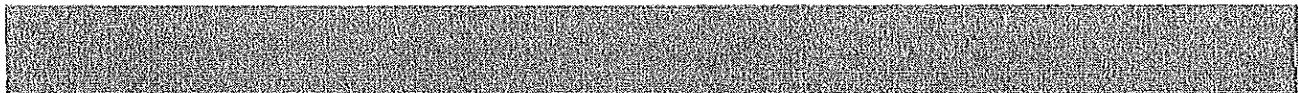
"Sadly, Americans have been intimidated, harassed, and even threatened for their political and religious beliefs, which should never happen in this country," said **Robert Alt**, president and chief executive officer of The Buckeye Institute. "Americans have a First Amendment right to join, support, and speak collectively through organizations without being put on a government list that is vulnerable to hackers and leaking to extremists who refuse to tolerate opposing views."

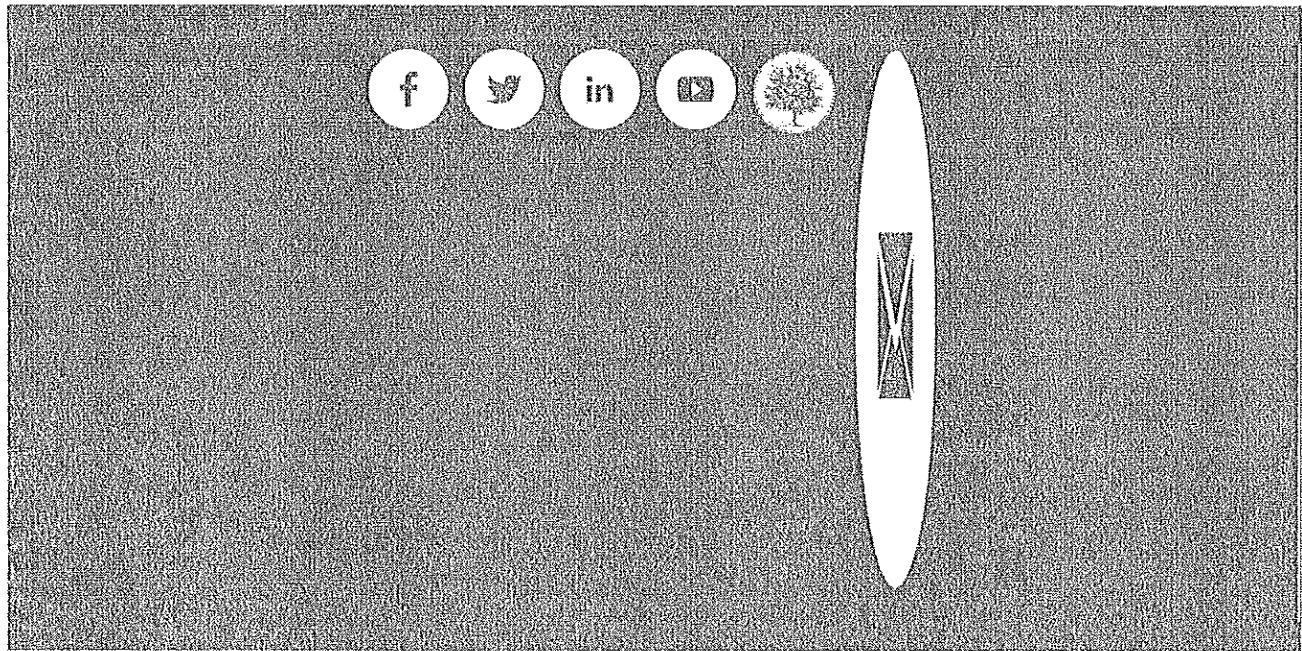
The coalition sent a letter to Congress calling for the elimination of the 990 Schedule B form requirement for 501(c) organizations, which is a mandatory IRS form that lists names and addresses of donors who give to private charities and other 501(c) organizations. Although the IRS is legally prohibited from using the information collected, the retention of this information, as the letter highlights, has resulted in intimidation and harassment of donors.

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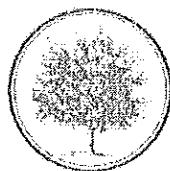
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By now you've seen our **outdoor ads** and read about our **Worker Voting Rights** campaign to empower public employees with the voting rights they deserve.

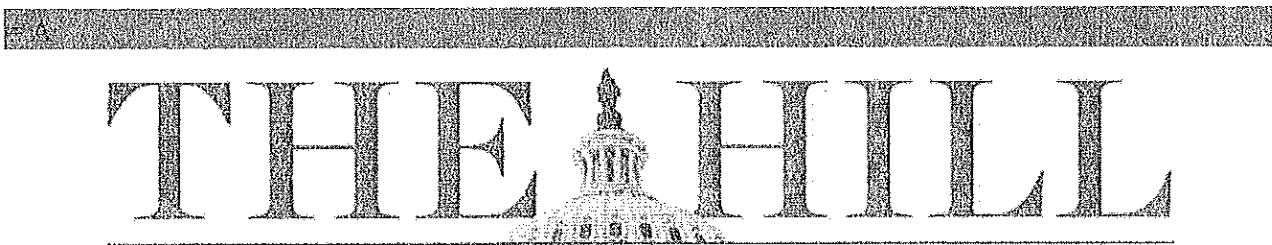
Yesterday, Robert Alt, our president and CEO, had a piece published in *The Hill* arguing that it is time to give public employees the right to vote on the union that represents them at the bargaining table. Robert writes,

"But without a vote through which members can choose their own union, today's public-sector employees are rendered mute and unable to have a meaningful opportunity to select a new union or hold their current union accountable if it fails to meet expectations or protect its workers' interests."

It is hard to be opposed to giving people the right to vote, but unfortunately entrenched interests insist that our hard-working civil servants "simply wear the hand-me-down

unions that their foremothers and fathers passed down from the Johnson and Carter years."

As Robert writes, "It is time for unions to embrace their democratic heritage and support their own members' right to vote. It is time for all of us to join together to create more perfect unions. It is time for public employees to have a voice and a choice. It is time for worker voting rights."



## Hand-me-down unions don't work for current workers

*The Hill*

By Robert Alt

February 8, 2018

*This opinion piece appeared in The Hill, you can [read the full piece here](#).*

The recent issue over a potential federal government shutdown reminded us that Americans rely on our public employees to provide and maintain important services across the country.

Federal, state, local or public-sector employees are too often represented by hand-me-down labor unions that current workers inherited from government employees of a bygone era.

Historically, labor unions have played a significant role in fighting for both workers' rights and fair representation at the bargaining table.

Labor unions laid the foundation for the democratic rights of marginalized minorities when black workers formed the Colored National Labor Union in 1869, 14 months before blacks secured the right to vote.

Thirty-five years later, the American Women's Trade Union launched a successful campaign for women's suffrage. Those bottom-up victories stand in stark contrast to today's top-down operation of unions that are now denying their own members the right to vote.

Unfortunately, union leaders who once fought so hard for democratic rights and representation have refused to recognize voting rights for their own members.

Rather than allow today's union members to have a real voice and a choice, entrenched labor leaders insist that these public-sector employees simply wear the hand-me-down unions that their foremothers and fathers passed down from the Johnson and Carter years.

In fact, **94 percent of current union members have never had the opportunity to vote** for which union will negotiate their pay, benefits, hours, and working conditions on their behalf.

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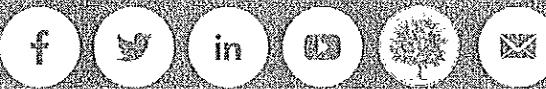
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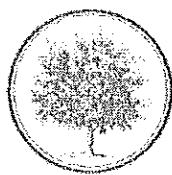
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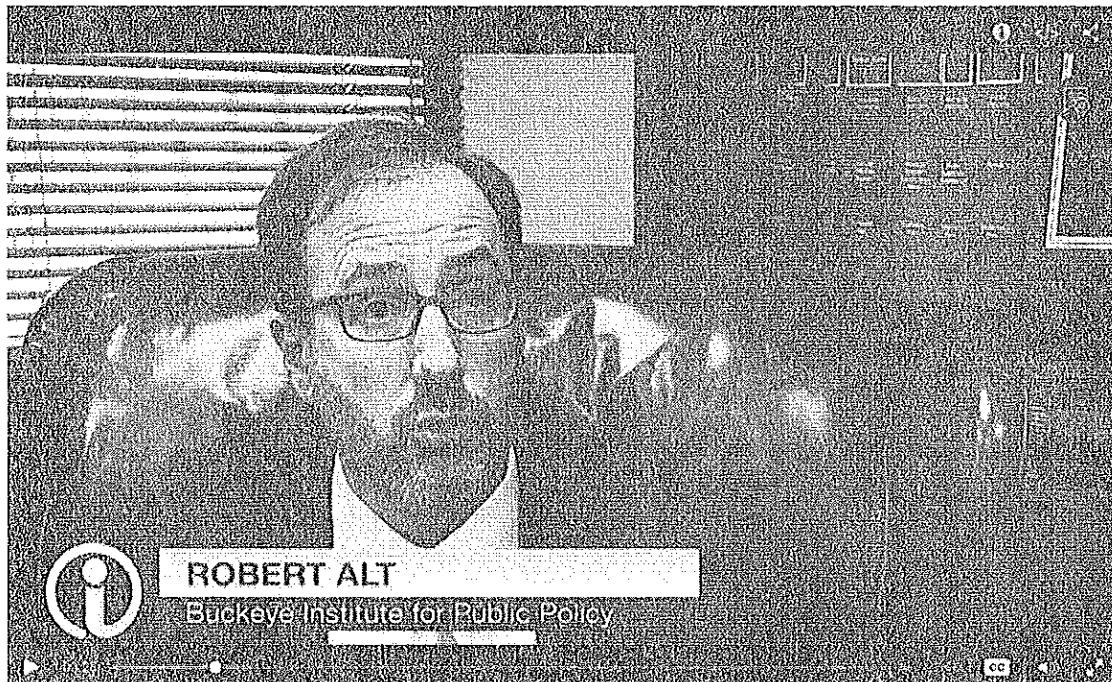
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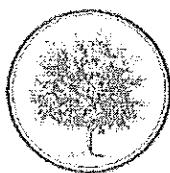
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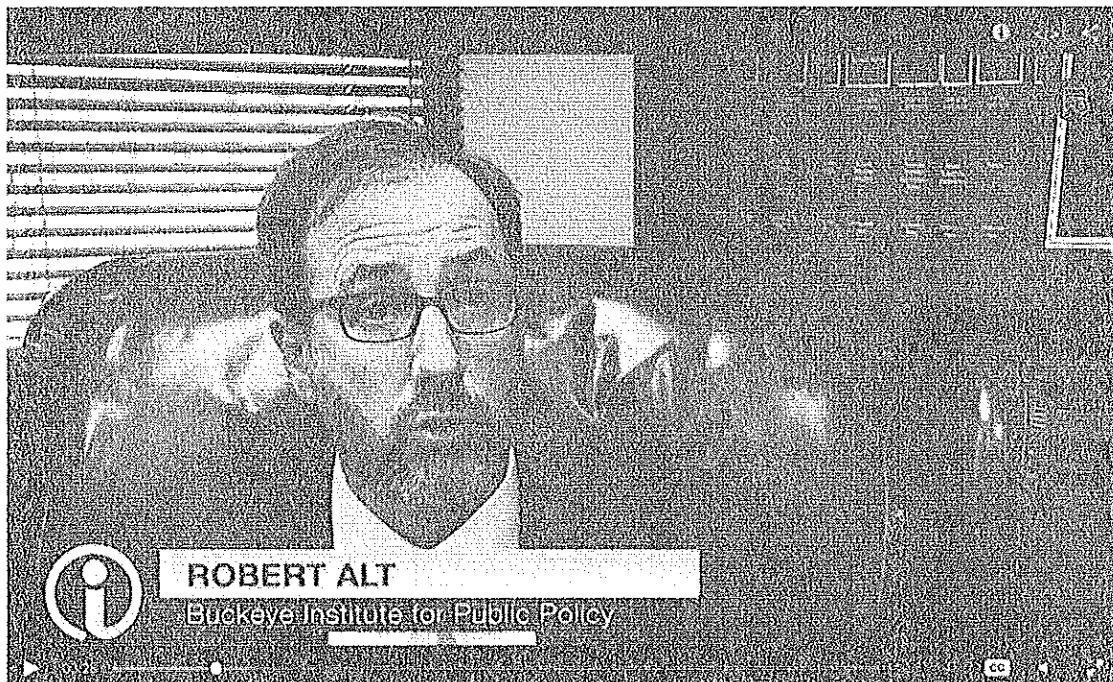
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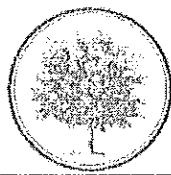
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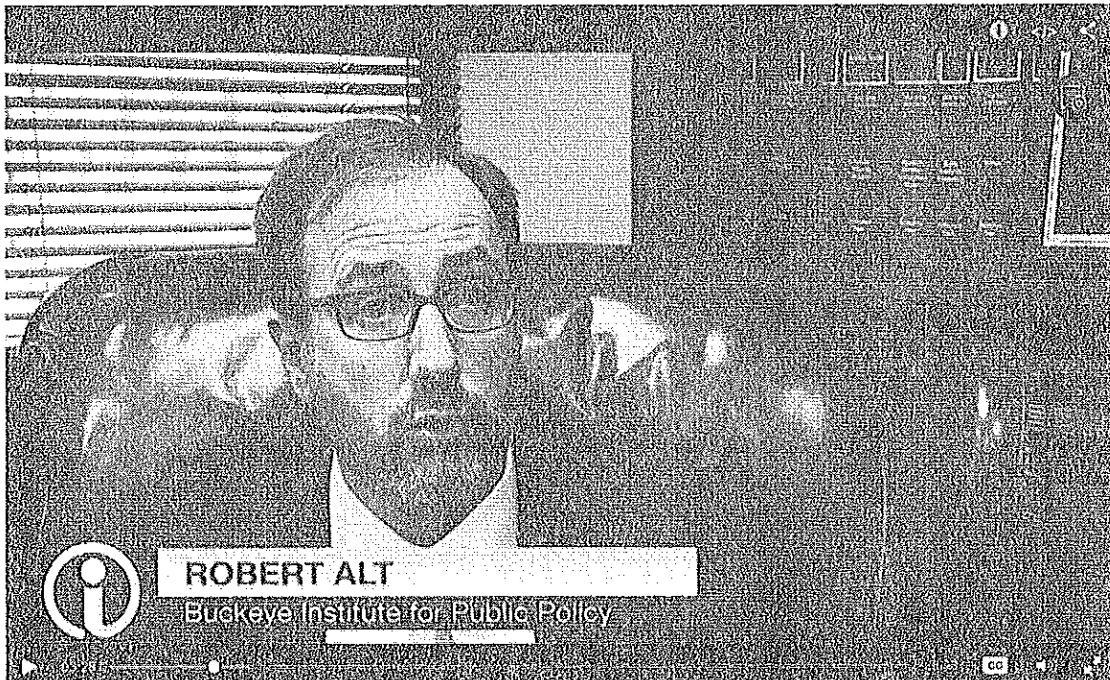
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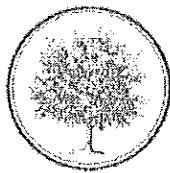
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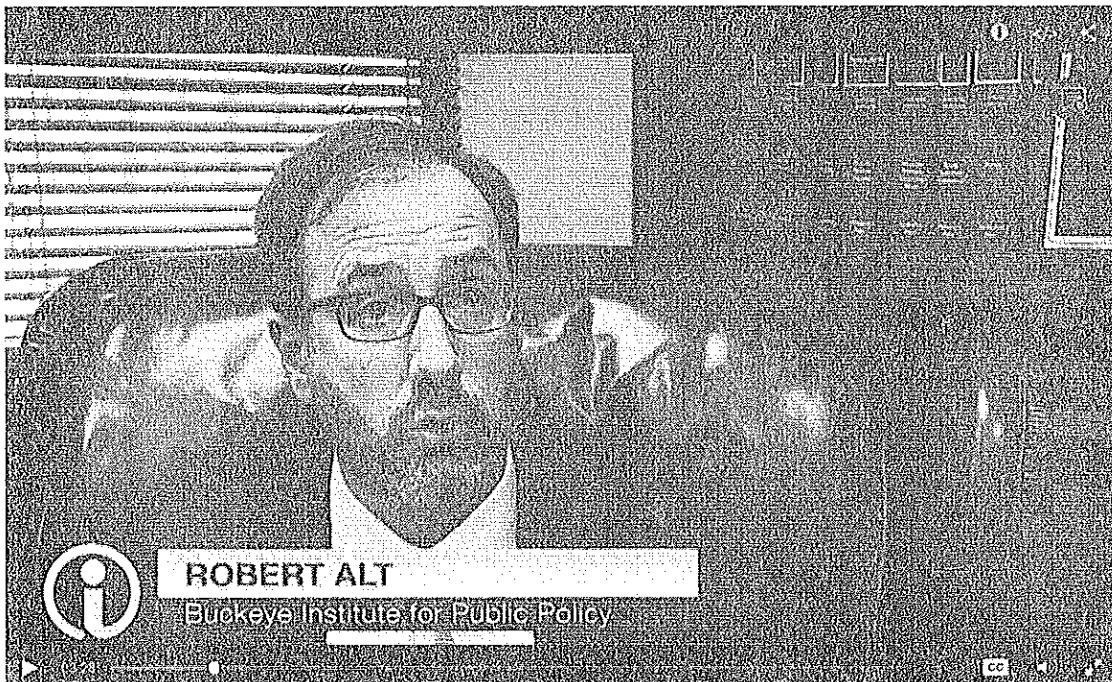
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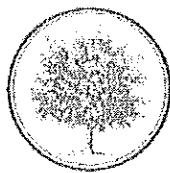
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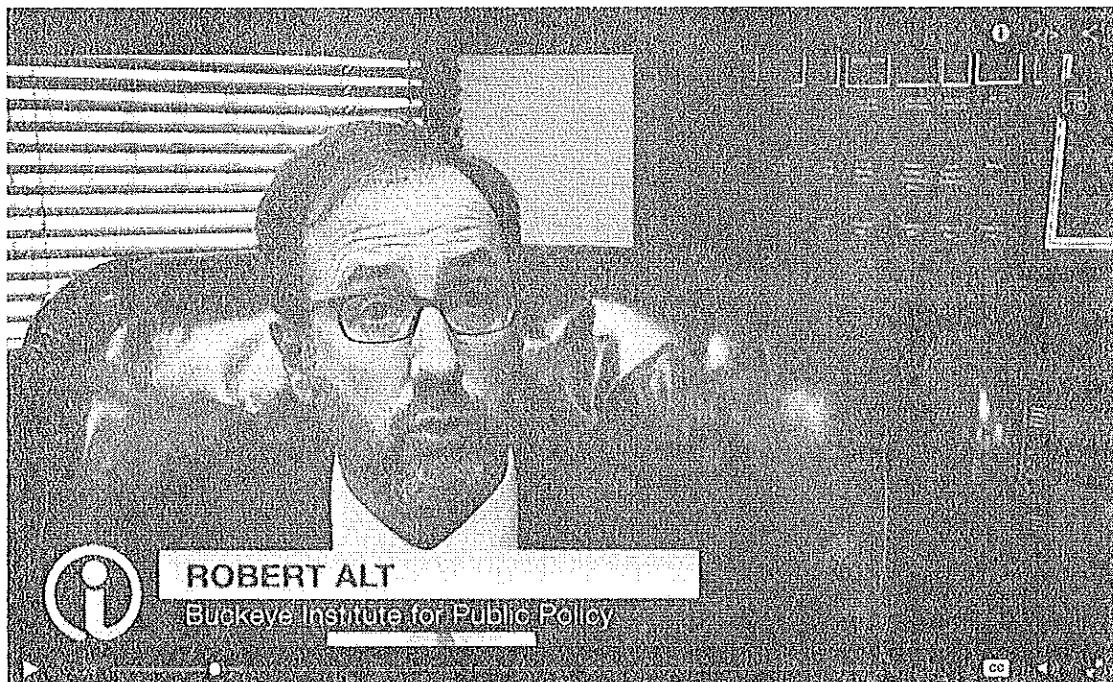
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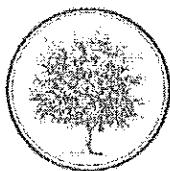
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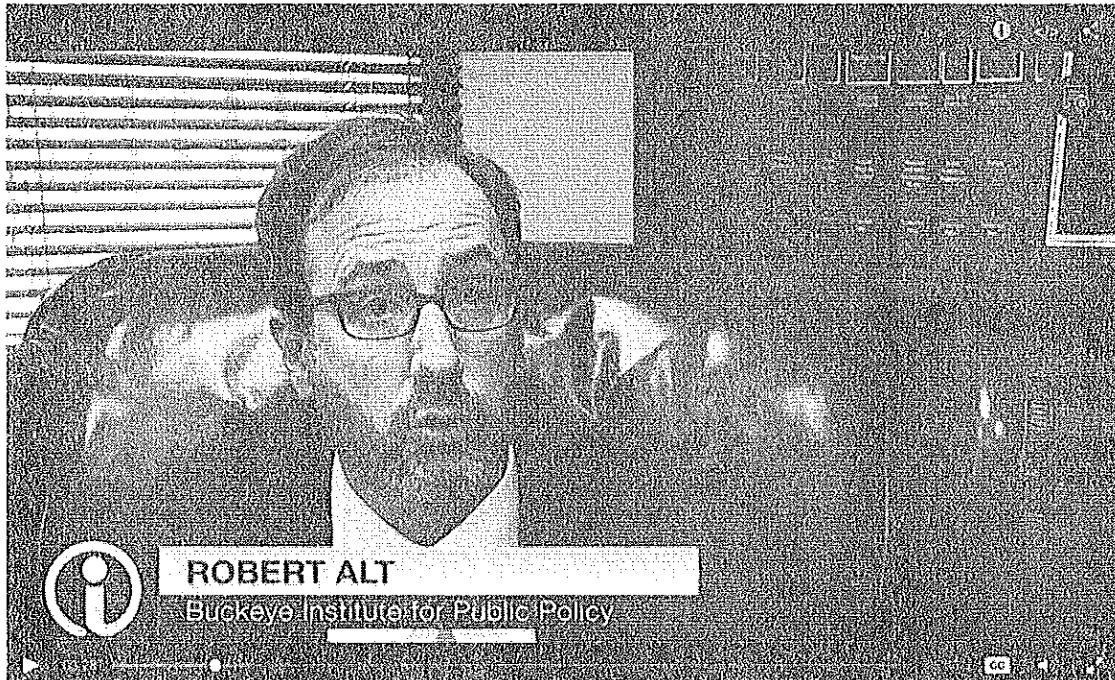
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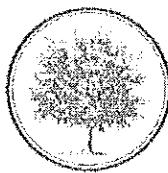
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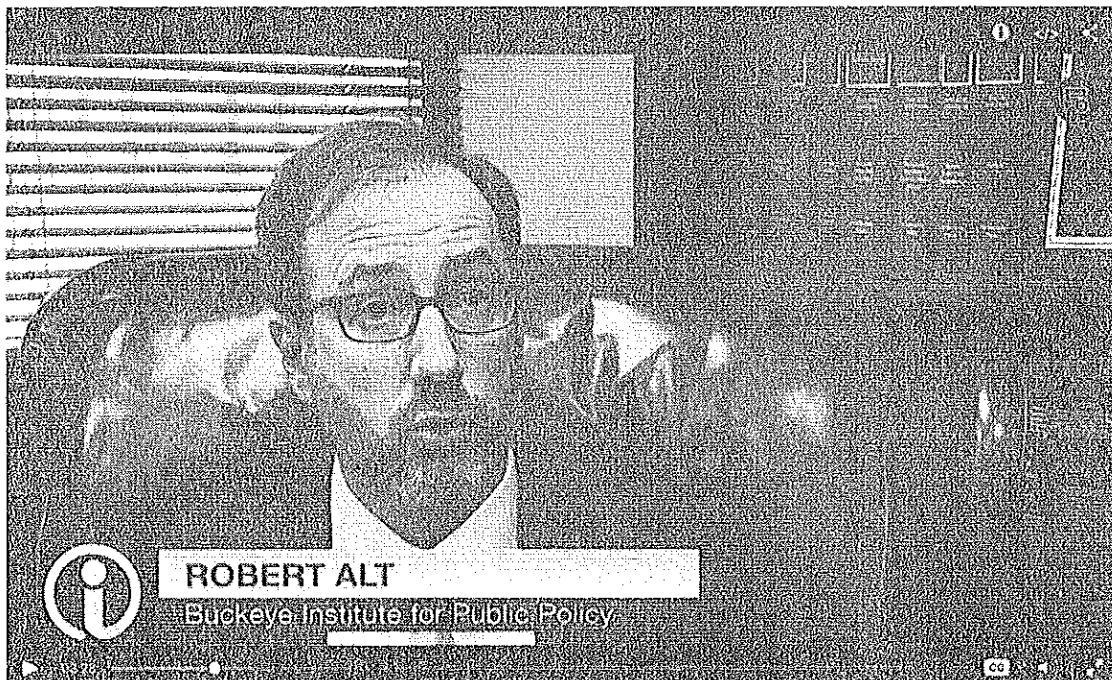
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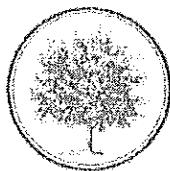
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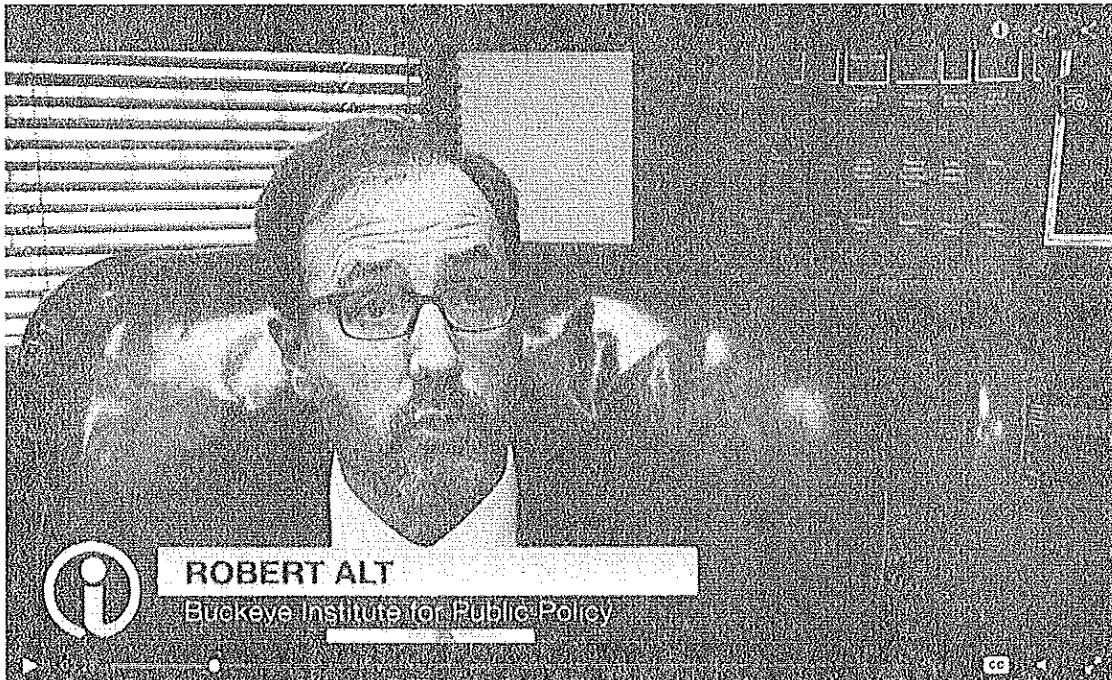
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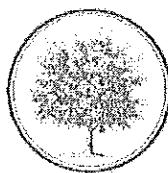
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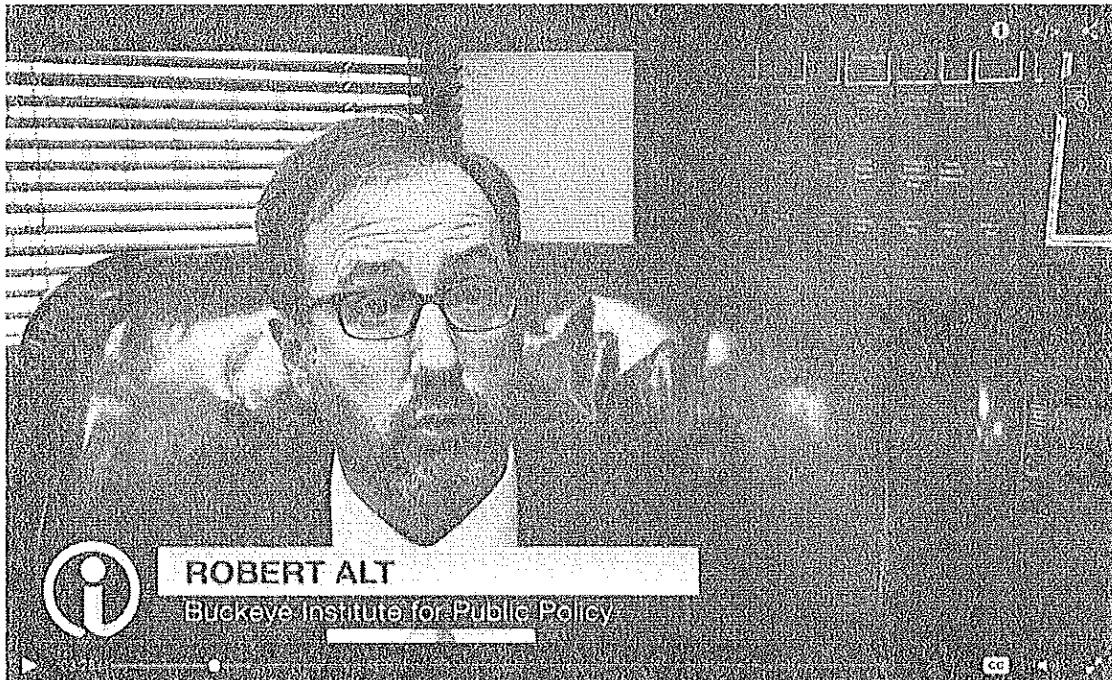
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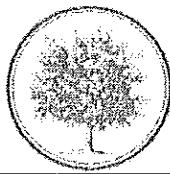
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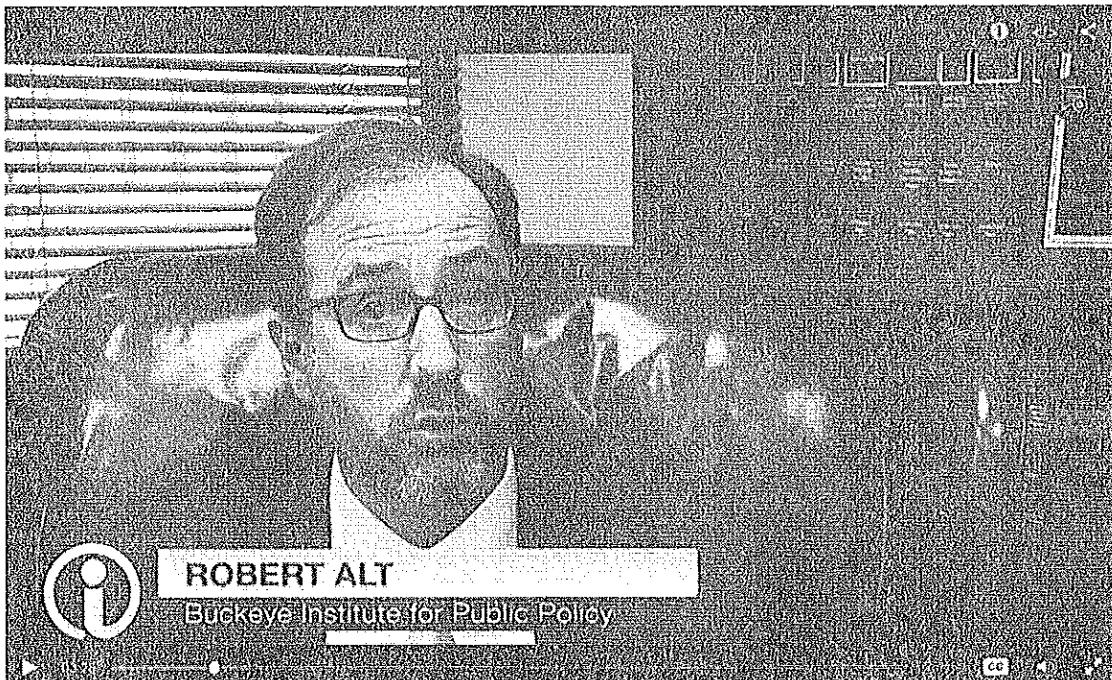
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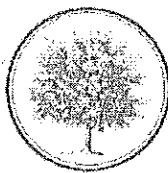
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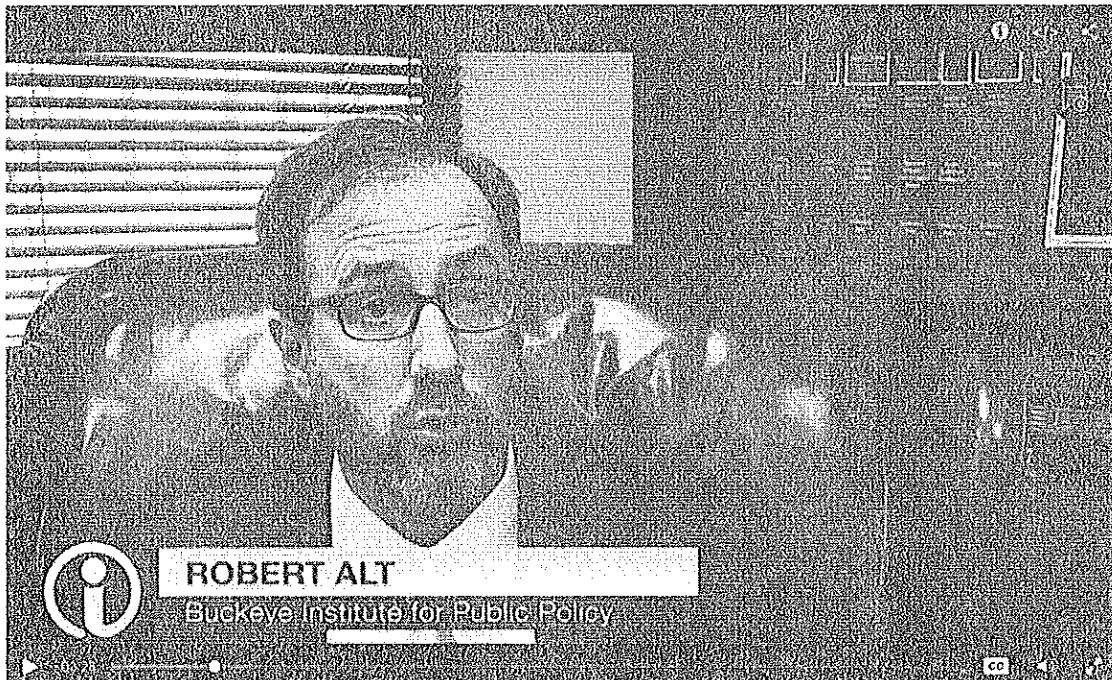
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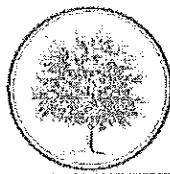
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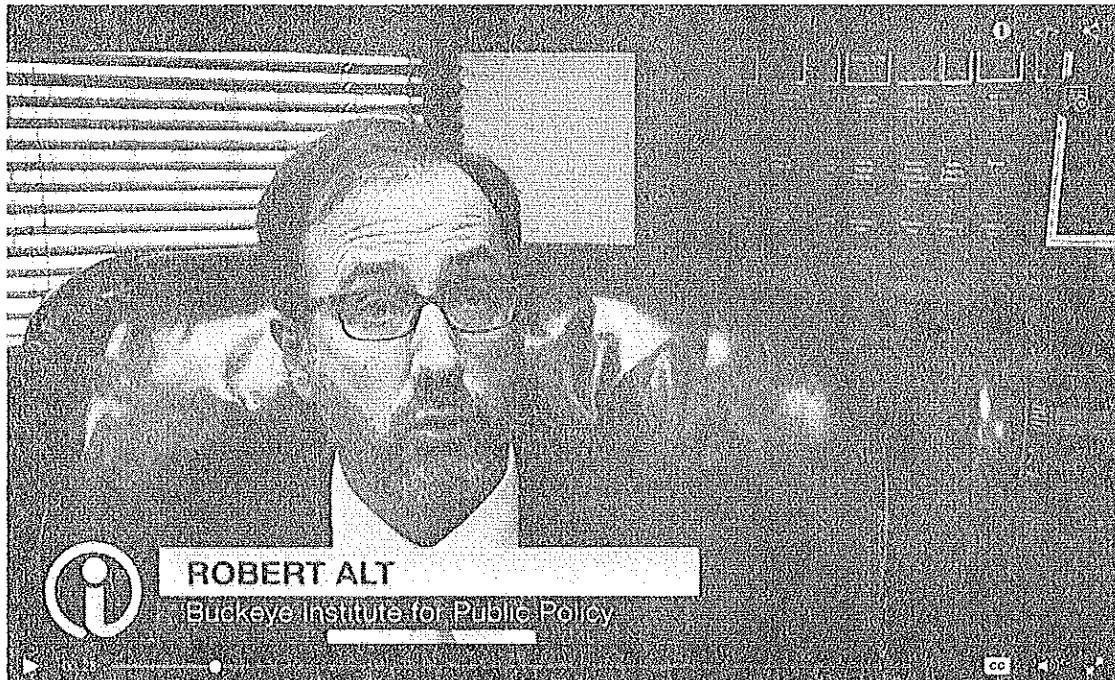
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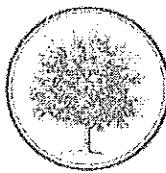
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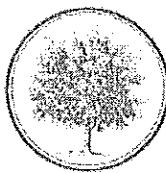
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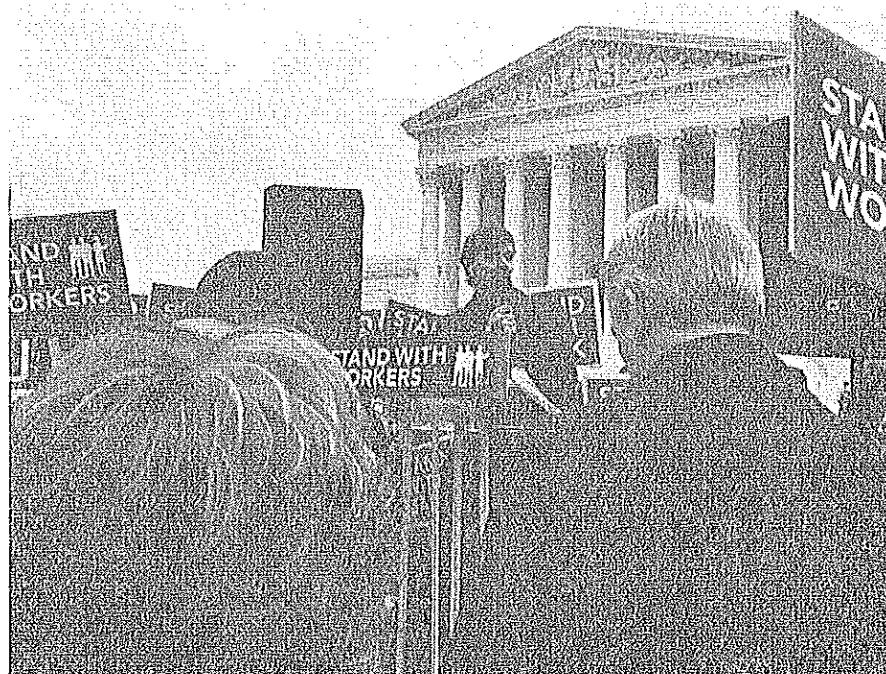
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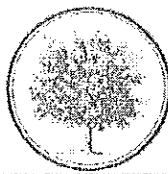
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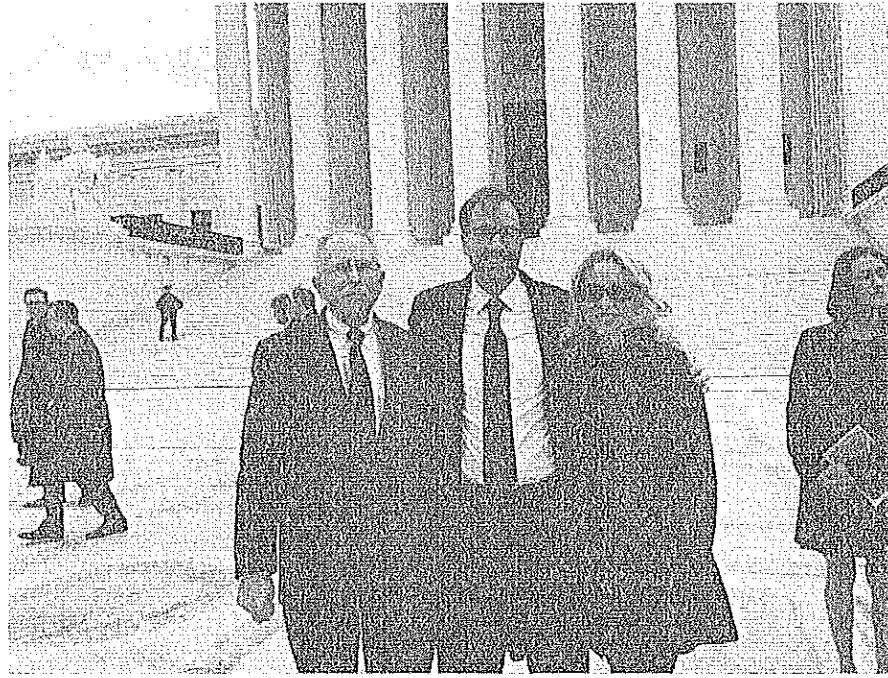
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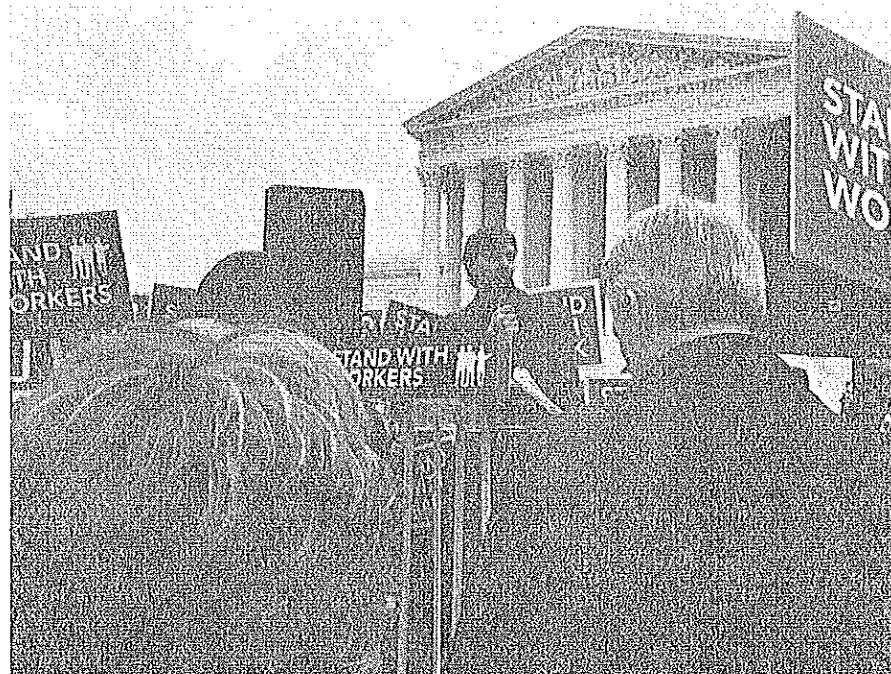
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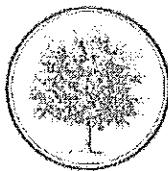
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## THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE

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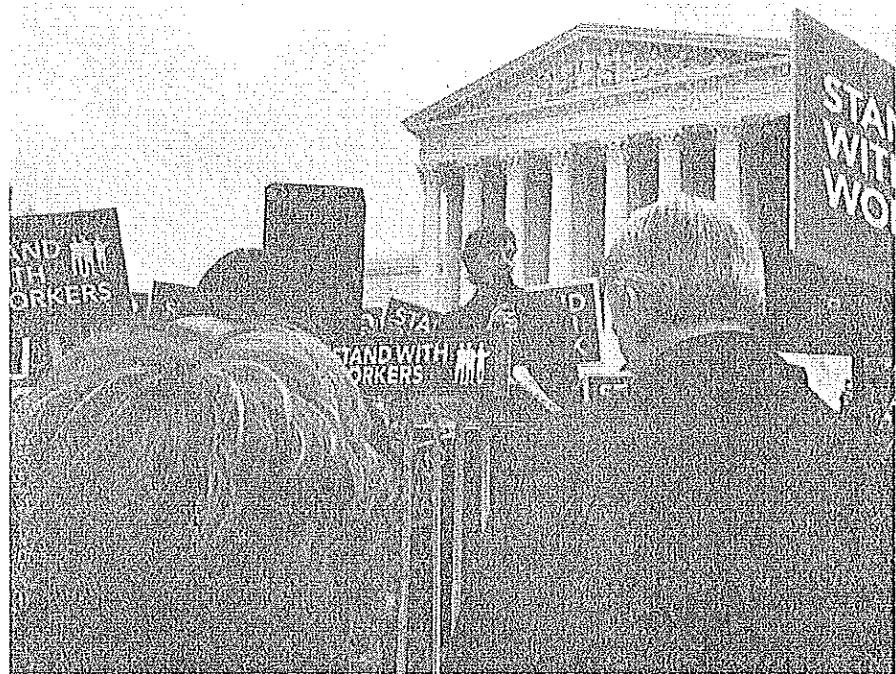
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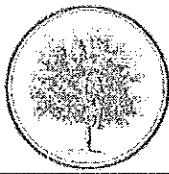
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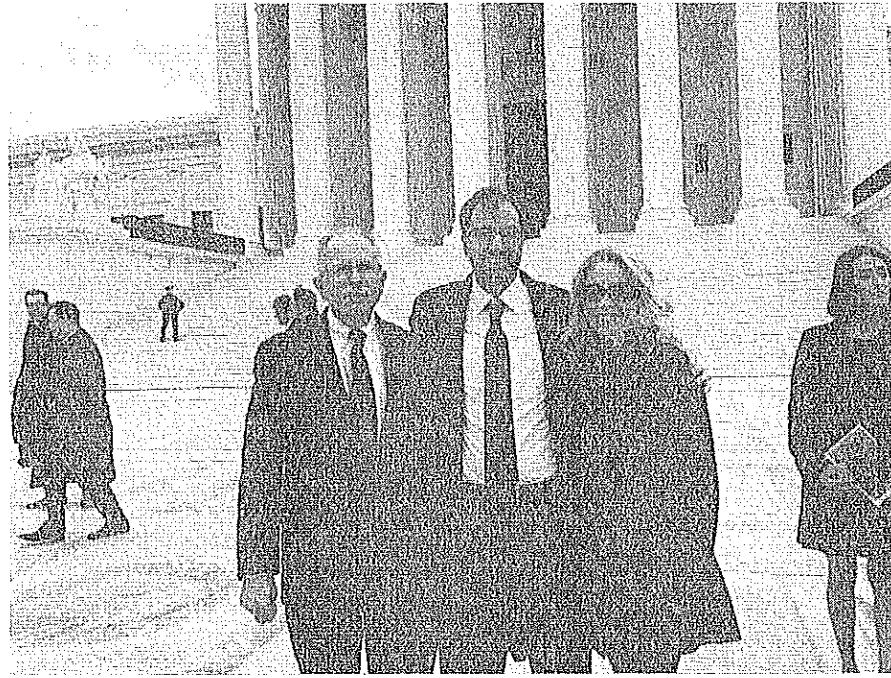
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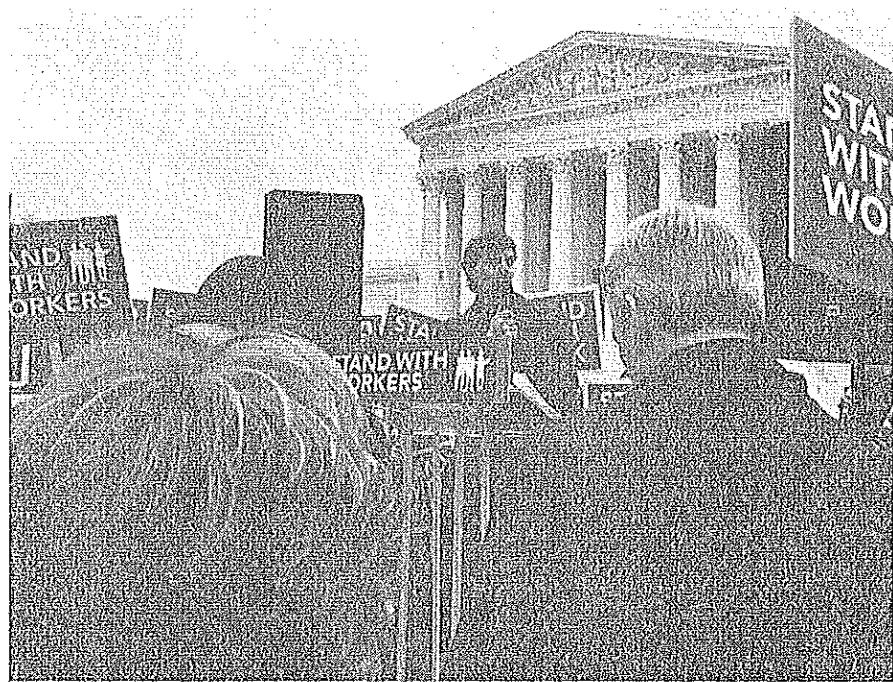
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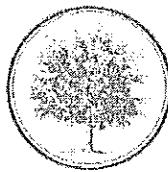
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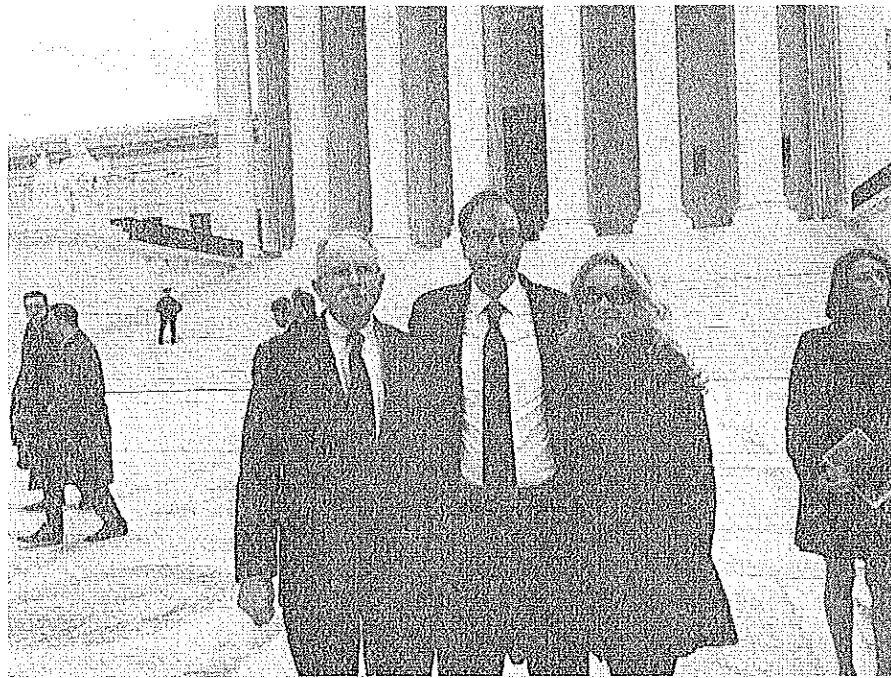
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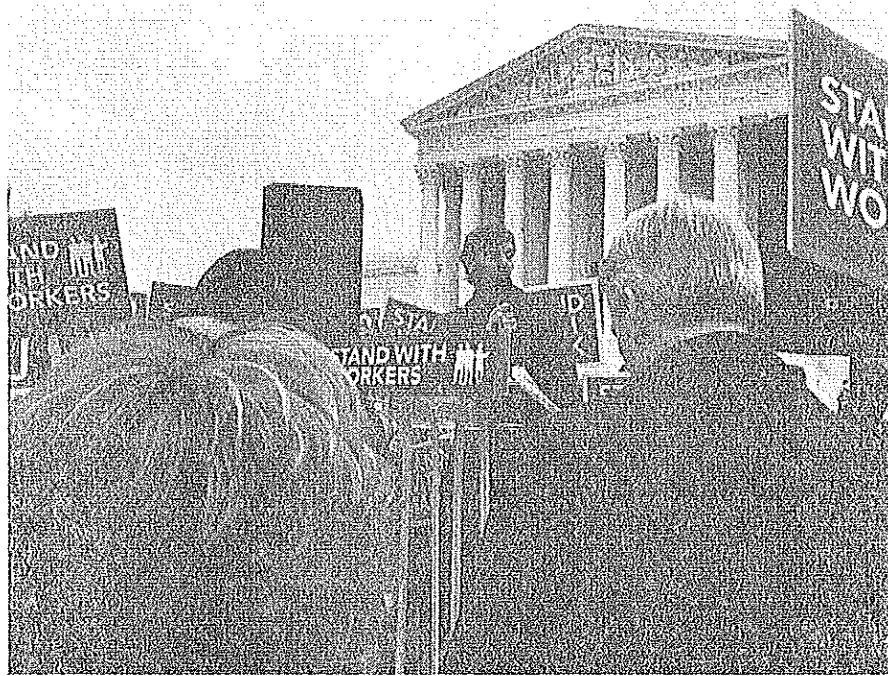
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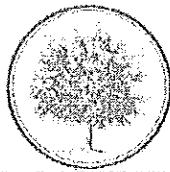
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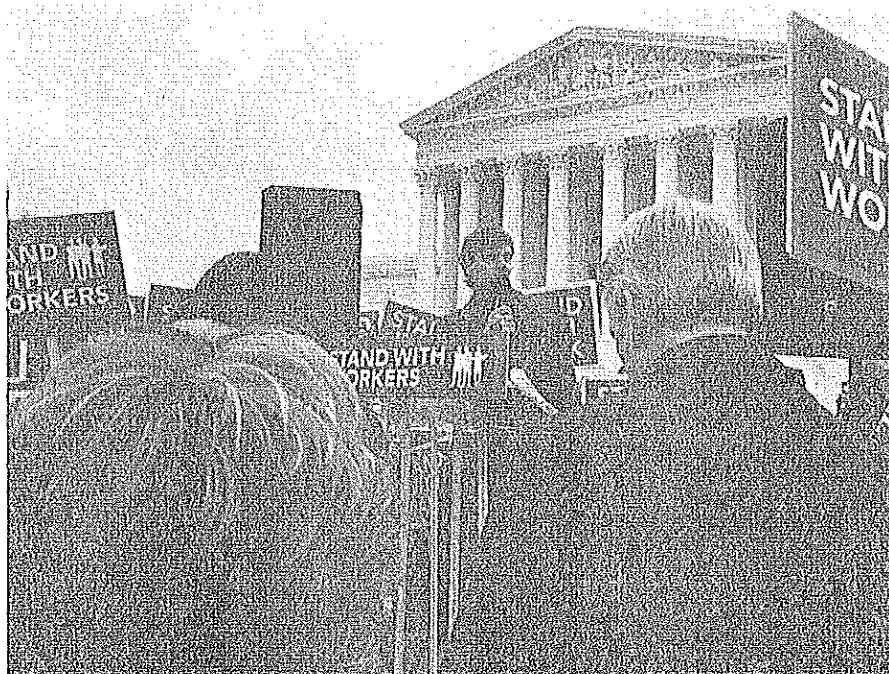
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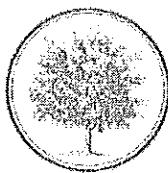
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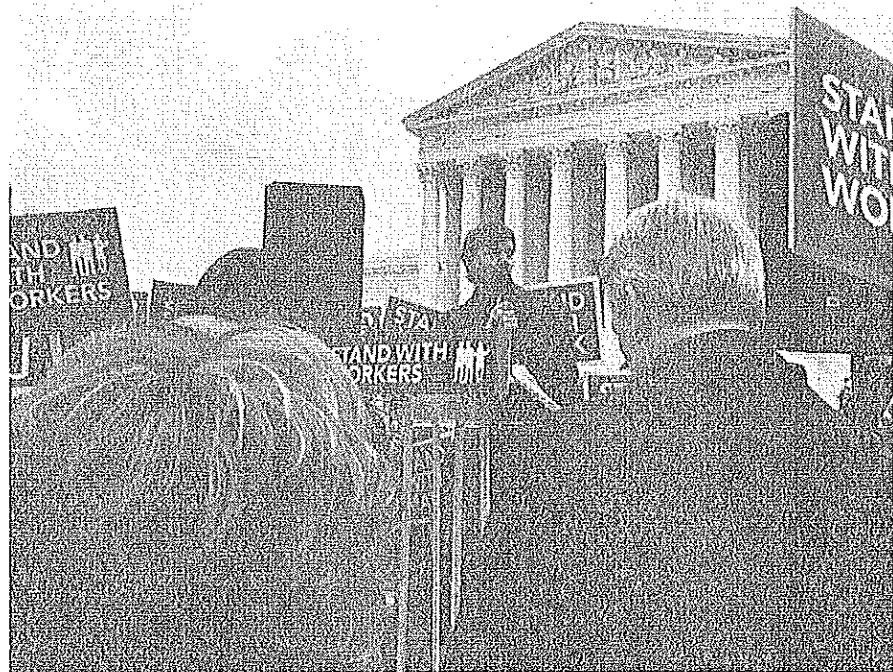
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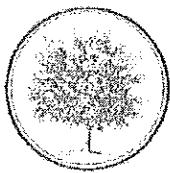
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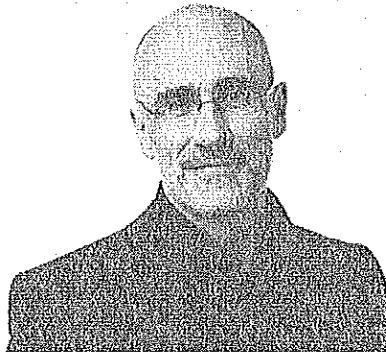
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You are cordially invited to join us for an extraordinary luncheon talk featuring American Enterprise Institute (AEI) President Arthur Brooks on Wednesday, March 21, at noon.

This is a very special event and great opportunity that you don't want to miss, so register soon as it will likely sell out. (Further details available by following registration link.)

We hope to see you there!

Sincerely,

Your friends at The Buckeye Institute

[Register to Attend](#)

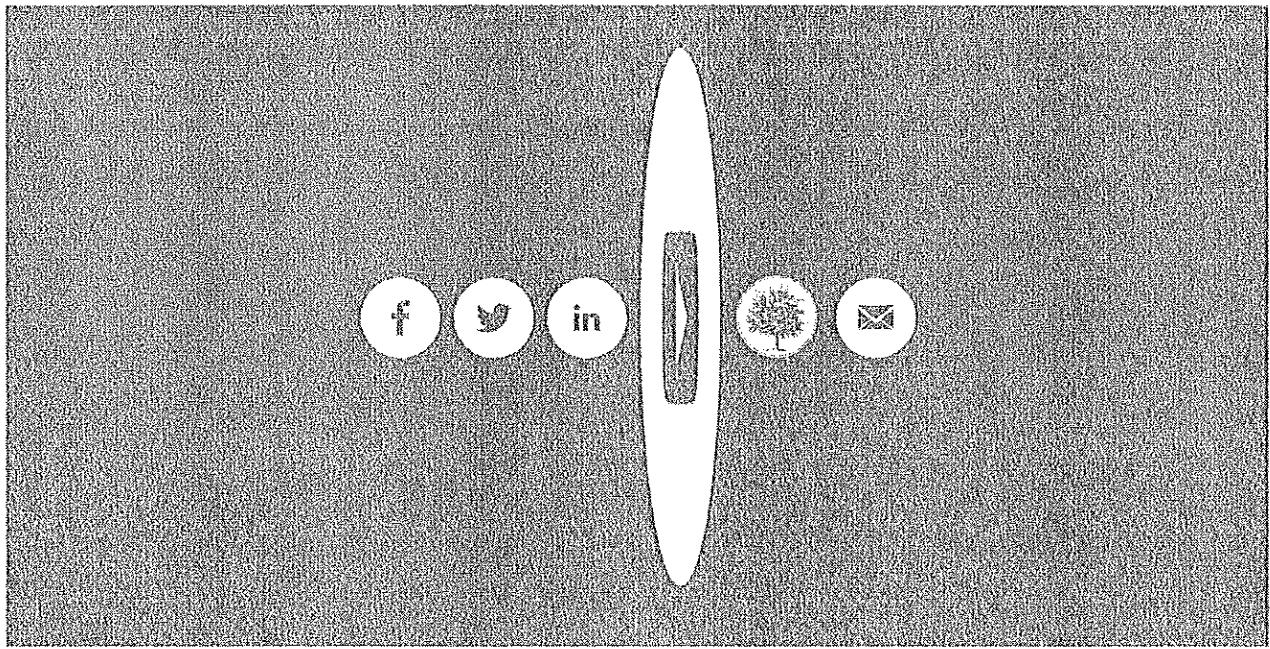
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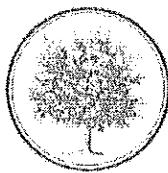
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
March 5, 2018

### **More Than \$18 Million Spent on The Buckeye Institute's Top 10 List of Worst Capital Budget Requests**

*Ohio's Capital Budget Riddled with More Than \$85 Million in Pork Spending*

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Columbus, OH -- Today, The Buckeye Institute unveiled its Top 10 Worst Capital Budget Requests of 2018, which total more than \$18 million in spending. Buckeye's review of the capital budget also found more than \$85 million in pork barrel or highly localized projects that should be paid for with private donations or through local efforts.

"As our Top 10 list shows, once again, Ohio's capital budget is riddled with pork projects that benefit narrow local interests and not larger state needs. If these, and other pork projects in the budget, were funded using local or private dollars, as they should be, Ohio could have at least \$85 million more that it could spend on pressing state priorities, save, or better yet, return to taxpayers," said Greg R. Lawson, research fellow at The Buckeye Institute. "Policymakers should do more to heed our call to focus the capital budget on **strengthening Ohio's physical and democratic infrastructure** and move away from projects of predominately local interest. Simply put, it is hard to see how it benefits someone in Youngstown for Cincinnati to get a soccer stadium or how people in Cleveland benefit from renovations to COSI."

### Buckeye's Top 10 Worst Capital Budget Requests of 2018

- **\$400,000** to build government owned broadband networks in North Olmsted, Southern Miami Valley, and Fairborn. The Buckeye Institute has shown these networks would be better built by the private sector;
- **\$5 million** for the **COSI Connection Corridor**, a retail and restaurant space, in Columbus;
- **\$1 million** for two Columbus Zoo exhibits, which is partially funded by Franklin County property taxes;
- **\$1 million** for an atrium at the **North Market** that will connect it to the 35-story office and residential Market Tower;
- **\$800,000** for six splash pads around the state;
- **\$2.5 million** to expand the **Cleveland Museum of Natural History**;
- **\$1.3 million** to renovate the **Blossom Music Center** in Cuyahoga Falls;
- **\$4 million** for a new Major League Soccer stadium in Cincinnati. The money will only be released if Cincinnati is awarded an MLS expansion team;
- **\$1.2 million** for renovations to Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park; and
- **\$1 million** for renovations to the **Toledo Museum of Art**.

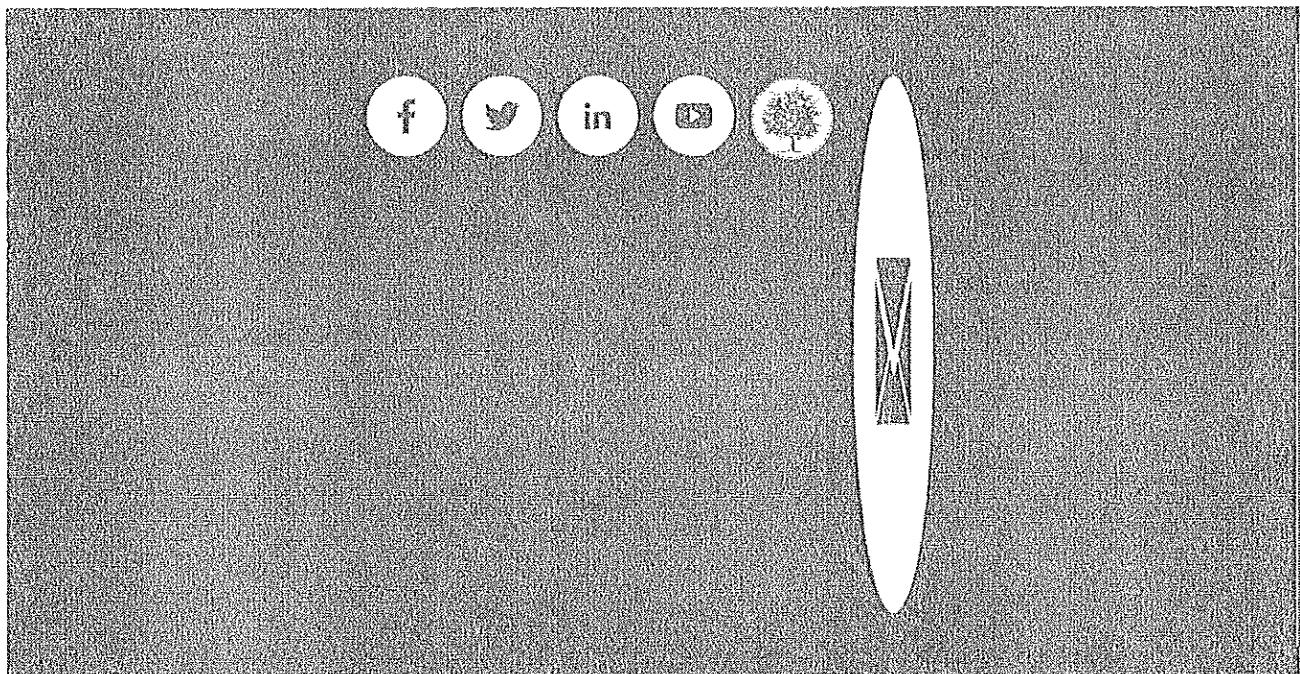
In its report in *Principled Spending: Using Ohio's Capital Budget to Benefit Ohioans*, Buckeye outlined three principles to guide policymakers - constrain the growth of state government, eliminate corporate and special interest welfare, and focus spending on the core functions of state government. The Buckeye Institute also urged policymakers to use the 2018 capital budget to strengthen Ohio's physical and democratic infrastructure.

A review of the capital budget shows that more than \$1 billion is being used to strengthen Ohio's physical infrastructure and there is no money in the capital budget being used to strengthen Ohio's democratic infrastructure.

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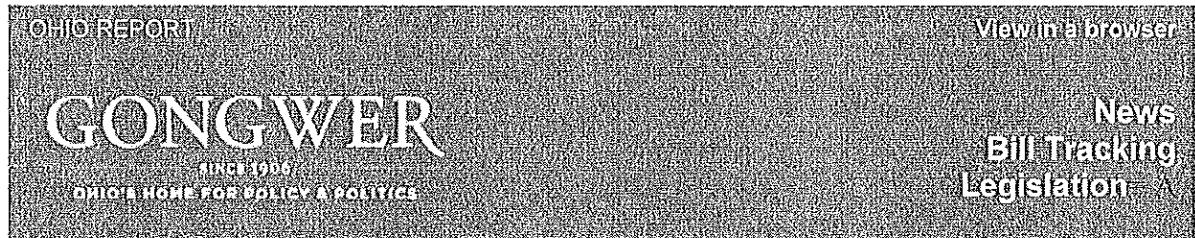
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## OHIO REPORT MONDAY, MARCH 5

**Children Services Rule To Get Second Look After Concerns Raised At JCARR**

**Report Outlines Ohio's Rankings Ahead Of Kasich's Address**

**Lawmaker Looks To Crack Down On Theft In Office**

**Opioid Prescriptions Fall For Fifth Straight Year, Pharmacy Board Reports**

**DeWine Sues Monsanto, Crew SC Operator/Investor And MLS**

**Planned Updates To Give Farmers New Tool In Curbing Phosphorus Runoff**

**House District 83: Former Nurse, Business Leader Face Off In GOP Primary**

**Rover, OEPA Clash Over Landslides, Detected Chemical Traces**

**New Member Profile: Rep. McClain Follows In Father's Footsteps**

**Politics Notebook: Buckeye Institute Highlights Capital Budget 'Pork'; Taylor Picks Up Endorsement; Schiavoni Releases New Ad; Balderson Touts War Chest**

**Supplemental Agency Calendar**

**Supplemental Event Planner**

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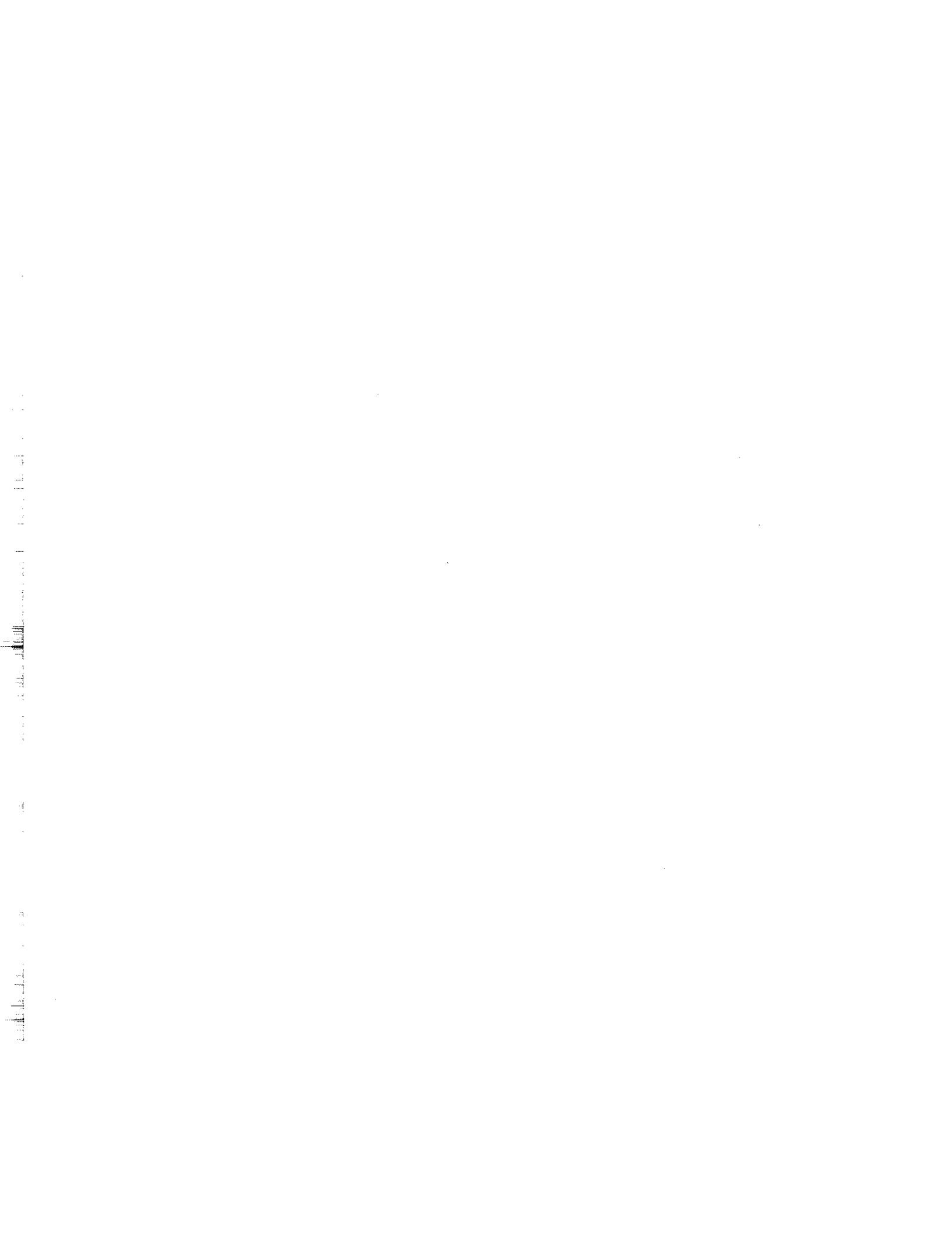
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## Daily Activity Planner for Tuesday, March 6

Senate Public Utilities (Committee Record) (Chr. Beagle, B., 466-6247), Finance Hearing Rm., 9:30 a.m.

- Confirmation hearing on governor's appointments of M. Beth Trombold, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio and Gregory Murphy, Power Siting Board

HB 478 WIRELESS SERVICES (Smith, R., LaTourette, S.) To modify the law regarding wireless service and the placement of small cell wireless facilities in the public way. (1st Hearing-Sponsor)

House Finance (Committee Record) (Chr. Smith, R., 466-1366), Rm. 313, 10 a.m.

HB 529 CAPITAL APPROPRIATIONS (Ryan, S.) To make capital appropriations and changes to the law governing capital projects and to make reappropriations for the biennium ending June 30,2020. (3rd Hearing-All testimony-Possible vote)

HB 508 OHIO CORPS (Ryan, S., Reineke, B.) To establish the OhioCorps Pilot Project and to make an appropriation. (4th Hearing-All testimony-Possible vote)

HB 378 BROADBAND GRANTS (Smith, R., Cera, J.) To create the Ohio Broadband Development Grant Program and to make an appropriation. (7th Hearing-All testimony-Possible amendments, substitute & vote)

House Ways & Means (Committee Record) (Chr. Schaffer, T., 466-8100), Rm. 121, 10 a.m.

SB 226 TAX HOLIDAY (Bacon, K.) To provide for a permanent three-day sales tax "holiday" each August during which sales of clothing and school supplies are exempt from sales and use tax. (2nd Hearing-Proponent)

House Agriculture & Rural Development (Committee Record) (Chr. Hill, B., 644-6014), Rm. 121, 1 p.m.

HB 501 VETERINARY TITLES (LaTourette, S., Huffman, S.) To change professional title of "registered veterinary technician" to "registered veterinary nurse." (1st Hearing-Sponsor)

HR 298 ALFALFA PRODUCTS (Sprague, R., Hill, B.) To recognize the existence of two alfalfa products in light of the recent action of the Ingredient Definition Committee of the Association of American Feed Control Officials. (1st Hearing-Sponsor)

Senate Finance (Committee Record) (Chr. Oelslager, S., 466-0626), Finance Hearing Rm., 2:30 p.m.

SB 266 CAPITAL APPROPRIATIONS (Oelslager, S.) To make capital appropriations and changes to the law governing capital projects and to make

reappropriations for the biennium ending June 30,2020. (3rd Hearing-Opponent)

**SB 225** **BROADBAND GRANTS** (Schiavoni, J., Eklund, J.) To create the Ohio Broadband Development Grant Program and to make an appropriation. (1st Hearing-Sponsor)

**SB 246** **STUDENT REMOVAL** (Lehner, P., Manning, G.) To enact the "SAFE Act" to revise the procedures for emergency removal of a student, to prohibit certain suspensions and expulsions of students in grades pre- kindergarten through three, to require each public school to implement a positive behavior intervention and supports framework in accordance with state standards, and to make an appropriation. (1st Hearing-Sponsor)

**HB 329** **PYRAMID SCHEMES** (Pelanda, D.) To modify the law governing pyramid promotional schemes. (3rd Hearing-Opponent)

House Session (Committee Record), Senate Session (Committee Record) (Chr. Rosenberger, C., 466-3357, Chr. Obhof, L., 466-4900), Fritzsche Theater, Otterbein University, 30 S. Grove St., Westerville, 7 p.m.

- Joint convention for the Governor's State of the State address

#### **Agenda Calendar**

Small Business Advisory Council, Women's Small Business Accelerator's ThinkSpace, 24 Westerville Dr., Westerville, 10 a.m.

Public Facilities Commission, 35th Fl., 30 E. Broad St., Columbus, 3:30 p.m.

#### **Event Planner**

OhioLINK, Ohio Department of Higher Education discussion on textbook affordability and open educational resources, Otterbein University, Towers Hall, Westerville, 10 a.m.

Sen. Rob McColley (R-Napoleon) fundraiser, Due Amici, 67 E. Gay Street, Columbus, 11:30 a.m., (Sponsor: \$1,000 | Host: \$500 | Guest: \$350 to Citizens for McColley)

Rep. Scott Ryan (R-Granville Township) fundraiser, Oliver's, 26 N. High St., Columbus, 11:30 a.m., (Sponsor: \$1,000; Host: \$500; Chair \$350 to Citizens for Scott Ryan)

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**Volume #87, Report #43 -- Monday, March 5, 2018**

**Children Services Rule Change Second Look At Concerns Raised At JCARR**

The Department of Job and Family Services will refile a proposed rule dealing with child abuse and neglect investigations after agencies said it would lead to more cases and higher costs.

The Public Children Services Association of Ohio told members of the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review Monday that the proposed rules would prevent agencies from making "collateral contacts" before deciding to accept a case. That means they would not be able to check certain details, such as whether a parent was in drug treatment, before opening an investigation.

ODJFS argued the county agencies have long been advised in state guidance not to do so. Contacting other people about a potential child abuse or neglect case before contacting the parent can jeopardize the parent's privacy.

The proposed rule changes were designed in part to incorporate revisions to the federal Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, which require more mandatory reporting in cases where children are born addicted to drugs.

The department included the provision preventing collateral contacts before cases to reinforce provisions that have been in guidance for more than a decade, Carla Carpenter, deputy director for the Office of Families and Children at ODJFS, told JCARR.

"The change to the rule merely echoes the guidance that we have been providing since 2005," she said.

Mary Wachtel, director of public policy for the PCSAO, said the rules would make it harder for agencies to screen potential cases by preventing them from following up for more information on referrals before opening an official investigation. It could lead to agencies opening investigations for children who aren't being neglected or abused, opening cases that would require home visits and other costs, she said.

"We are talking about a judicious, somewhat limited use of pre-screening collateral contacts," she said.

Other states allow for collateral contacts before cases are screened in, she said. Those states often have limits, such as that the only people to be contacted would be mandatory reporters of abuse or neglect, such as medical providers.

Ms. Wachtel suggested the department convene a stakeholder group to work out a solution.

"There is a fix here," she said. "We respectfully request that the rules be withdrawn to give time for a substantive discussion and consideration."

The department consulted with stakeholders before drafting the rule, Ms. Carpenter said.

Agencies are given 24 hours to gather information from internal sources, such as if the parent has had previous contact with the child welfare system, and to work back with the person referring the case, she said.

In many cases, particularly those involving drug abuse under the CARA provisions, the person making the referral is a medical professional, Ms. Carpenter said. In those cases, the provider can obtain a release of medical records from the parent to demonstrate that the parent has a drug treatment care plan, for example.

Lawmakers pressed the department on what would happen if the person making the referral was not a medical provider.

"How can you get a written release when you're not allowed to make a collateral contact?" Sen. Michael Skindell (D-Lakewood) asked.

The agencies would be able to look at the information they have and to ask follow-up to the person referring the case, Ms. Carpenter said. The rules follow the same procedure as guidance in place now.

"They essentially would be making that decision the same way they do today," she said.

JCARR Chair Sen. Joe Uecker (R-Loveland) asked how many counties are not complying with the guidelines.

Ms. Carpenter said the department wasn't aware of deviation from the guidance until recently.

Rep. Mike Duffey (R-Worthington) said the agency indicated the rule change would have no fiscal effect for the state or for counties, but it could increase the number of cases agencies take on.

The department said the change only codified what was expected to be standard practice, and increases weren't anticipated, Ms. Carpenter said.

"We have a duty as children services agencies to respond to reports that require our attention," she said. "We don't have control over what comes through our front door."

JCARR members caucused for about 45 minutes on the issue, after which ODJFS officials said they would refile the rule pending further discussions with stakeholders.

### **Report Outlines Ohio's Rankings Ahead Of Kasich's Address**

While the state comes in above national averages for the number of residents with health insurance, students enrolled in Pre-K, and structurally sound bridges, it is lagging behind in a number of other areas, a new report shows.

One Ohio Now, a coalition of more than 100 health and human service organizations, labor unions and advocacy groups, released its third annual State of Ohio report on Monday. It shows Ohio's rankings in 16 areas encompassing health, education, the economy and equality.

State Director Gavin DeVore Leonard said it's important that Ohioans have a full picture of how the state is doing before the governor delivers his annual State of the State address on Tuesday.

"Unfortunately, what typically happens with the State of the State is sort of cherry picking the things that make you sound the best, the things you feel like you have the most likelihood of succeeding on in the future, and then often times sort of glazing over the things that are really at the foundation of what's happening, particularly in a place like Ohio, where there is just no getting around it, we are struggling. We're having a hard time keeping up," he said during a Statehouse press event.

Gov. John Kasich and those close to him haven't divulged what his speech will entail, but he told reporters last week that it will be "odd" and "different" than in past years. Being his last SOTS address, he's expected to recap his accomplishments while in office and focus on how he's helped to change state operations during his tenure. (See Gongwer Ohio Report, March 2, 2018)

Responding to the One Ohio Now report, his spokesman, Jon Keeling, touted the impacts the governor's leadership has had on the state over the last seven years.

"Jobs are up. Wages are growing. More Ohioans have health coverage. Support for K-12 education is at record levels. Poverty is the lowest in nearly a decade. We're taking better care of the vulnerable and those who live in the shadows. And Ohioans are wearing our colors with pride in ways this state hasn't seen in a long time," he said.

"The governor has set a new standard for leadership here in Ohio, and if those values are continued the stage is set for even more progress long after he's gone."

In addition to showing where the state ranks nationally, the report also compares last year's stats to this year's. As infant mortality, overdose deaths and poverty got worse in Ohio in 2017, the state has improved in the areas of college tuition, home foreclosures and hunger.

Despite improvements in some categories, it shouldn't be overlooked that Ohio still ranks at the bottom of states, Mr. DeVore Leonard said.

Higher investments in underperforming areas, such as K-12 and programs combatting hunger could save the state billions of dollars in the long term because Ohioans would be better off, he said.

Especially in K-12, where spending on an inflationary basis has been stagnant since 2002, it's "hard to be a recipe for success," he said.

"We believe that this can be solved and that's actually what the data shows when you look at what's happening around the country," Mr. DeVore Leonard said. "We're nervous that what's happening is that the legislature and the governor are essentially ignoring what the data tells us about how to move our state. They're ignoring what the data tells us about how we should actually get fit and get strong here in Ohio."

To find the funding to make needed investments, he suggested the state repeal a controversial small business tax cut and increase income tax rates for the state's wealthiest.

Although Gov. Kasich has been a champion of eliminating personal income taxes, Mr. DeVore Leonard said a recent softening of his policy stances gives advocates hope that he could be swayed by the data in the report.

"Over the past several weeks and the last few years we've seen that the governor has shown a willingness to reconsider when the facts are just too clear to overcome," he said, citing the governor's support of Medicaid expansion and gun policy proposals.

Mr. DeVore Leonard was joined at the rollout of the report by Trina Payne, executive director of the Ross County Community Action Commission, small business owner Dan Heck, and Vincent Johns Jr. with Faith in Public Life.

Ms. Payne said she's most concerned about the rise in drug overdose deaths in Appalachia - something One Ohio Now tracked for the first time this year.

"Data shows that we must invest in our future as a state to ensure that these numbers decrease and families and communities are given resources to be successful," she said.

#### **[Lawmakers Look To Crack Down On Theft In Office]**

Public officials who get caught with their hands in the cookie jar would soon face steeper penalties under recently introduced legislation.

The proposal (SB 268) sponsored by Sen. Steve Wilson (R-Maineville) would establish first- and second-degree felony offenses for theft in office.



Sen. Wilson

Under current law, theft in office of any amount is limited to a third-degree felony that carries a maximum sentence of three years in prison.

The proposal would change the law to mirror existing penalties for theft. A theft in office of between \$150,000 and \$750,000 would result in a second-degree felony charge that carries a maximum sentence of up to eight years in prison.

Sen. Wilson said the legislation came about after conversations with State Auditor Dave Yost.

"We have a different set of standards for theft when it is someone in office, and in my estimation it shouldn't be," he said in an interview.

A theft of more than \$750,000 would result in a first-degree felony charge, making the offender eligible for a maximum prison sentence of 11 years.

In addition, the measure would allow courts to include the cost of a forensic audit in a restitution order when the victim is a public entity.

Rep. Derek Merrin (R-Maumee) has introduced legislation (HB 3916) to include the cost of accounting done to determine the extent of an economic loss for restitution purposes. It was recently amended to limit the amount of restitution to be granted for accounting or auditing costs to be reasonable and not exceed the value of the property stolen or damaged.

Sen. Wilson said he would be open to limiting the auditing costs that can be recouped, but wants to ensure that the public is made whole.

"I am open to that but my main concern is that the public not pay and the person who is audited and found guilty has to pay the costs," he said.

Sen. Wilson believes the measure will be well received in the legislature.

"I think it's so logical it will pass unanimously," he said.

Rep. Robert Cupp (R-Lima) is expected to introduce companion legislation in the lower chamber.

The proposal would also bar those convicted of theft in office from serving in a position of public trust.

"Theft in office is a severe crime that warrants an equally severe punishment," Auditor Yost said in a statement.

#### **Opioid Prescriptions Fall For Fifth Straight Year: Pharmacy Board Reports**

Doctors in Ohio prescribed fewer opioids in 2017, continuing an ongoing trend, according to data released Monday by the State Board of Pharmacy.

It was the fifth year in a row the number of opioid prescriptions reported to the state's Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System fell.

There were 568 million opioid doses dispensed to Ohio patients in 2017, the report found, down from 631 million in 2016 and 28.4% from an all-time high of 793 million in 2012.

There were 9.3 million total prescriptions dispensed, down from 10.1 million in 2016 and down from a high of 12.6 million in 2012.

"Ohio has one of the most comprehensive and aggressive approaches in the country to tackling the opioid epidemic," Pharmacy Board Executive Director Steven W. Schierholz said in a statement. "Through improvements to OARRS, new prescribing rules and guidelines, shutting down pill mills and aggressive regulatory action against unscrupulous prescribers, the state is making considerable progress in reducing the supply of prescription opioids and other controlled substances that can be abused or diverted."

The OARRS system saw more than 88 million patient reports requested, along with an 88% decrease in the number of people engaged in doctor shopping, the board reported.

"It is widely accepted that prescription opioid abuse often progresses to the use of heroin and other illicit drugs. That is why Ohio's efforts to reduce exposure to prescription opioids are essential to combatting this public health crisis," said Tracy Plouck, director of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

The report also found a decrease in the number of prescribers and patients receiving opioid prescriptions. The patient total dropped to just below 2 million, after topping 3 million in 2012. The number of prescribers also fell to just over 55,100, from a high of nearly 66,650 in 2012.

The number of benzodiazepines dispensed to patients also fell, dropping to 233 million solid doses from 254 million in 2016 and 297 million in 2012.

The report also tracked the number of opioid doses prescribed for acute pain, a recent point of emphasis for the state, which has limited the supply doctors can prescribe.

The number of doses for acute pain fell to just under 17 million in 2017, from a high of 31.2 million in 2012. The average prescription also fell from 8.37 days to 7.1 days.

County-level data is also available from the Board of Pharmacy.

The Ohio State Medical Association said doctors have been working to reduce the number of opioid painkillers given to patients.

"Ohio physicians for this entire decade have dedicated themselves to being part of the solution to the opioid epidemic which has gripped our state and we're seeing the positive effects of that commitment," OSMA spokesman Reggie Fields said in a statement. "Through better pain management treatment efforts and clearer state rules and guidelines, physicians are better equipped to make appropriate decisions when it is necessary to prescribe an opioid."

The OSMA pointed to its Smart Rx program, designed to educate prescribers about the safe use of opioids.

"Still, more work needs to be done to reduce the number of opioids dispensed and Ohio physicians remain committed to providing high-quality medical care that is safe and in the best interest of patients," he said.

#### [DeWine sues Monsanto, Crew SC operator, investors over move](#)

Attorney General Mike DeWine on Monday announced the filing of two lawsuits - one against a multinational agrochemical company and another designed to halt the possible move of the Columbus Crew.

Filed in Hamilton County Common Pleas Court, Mr. DeWine accuses Monsanto of producing and selling polychlorinated biphenyls from 1929 to 1977 despite knowing the risk the chemical compound posed to humans.

"Ohioans deserve to enjoy their natural resources without contamination from these toxic chemicals, and we believe Monsanto should be held responsible for the damage it caused," the gubernatorial candidate said in a statement. "Our goal in taking this action is to protect Ohio, its citizens, and its natural resources."

The company did not respond to a request for comment on the lawsuit by publication time.

PCBs were used in paints, inks, caulks, sealants, lubricants, electrical equipment and carbonless copy paper, according to the lawsuit.

The chemical compound builds up in living things and contaminates the food chain. In humans, PCBs are associated with cancer, skin and eye disorders, reduced birth weight and liver damage.

The contamination has also been found in fish, soil, plants and the air, the lawsuit alleged.

Despite learning of the toxicity of the chemical in the 1930, the company continued to use the product, according to the lawsuit, which alleges Monsanto was negligent and created a public nuisance through its manufacture, distribution and sale of PCBs.

The lawsuit seeks compensation and damages to investigate and remove PCBs from the state's natural resources.

**Crew Lawsuit:** Mr. DeWine also filed a lawsuit against Precourt Sports Ventures and Major League Soccer to stave off the soccer club's move to Austin.

The lawsuit is based on the "the Art Modell law," which states that an Ohio professional sports team that uses a "tax-supported facility" and receives financial assistance from the state or a political subdivision cannot relocate without an agreement with the political subdivision. It also must give the political subdivision or any group of individuals who reside in the area an opportunity to buy the team.

Among the allegations in the lawsuit is that the franchise accepted \$5 million in state funds for improvements to parking facilities, the land on which its home stadium sits is exempt from property taxes and the land is leased at below-market rate.

"Loyal Crew fans in Columbus have invested their time and loyalty in this team, and they have allowed the Crew SC to capitalize from financial incentives paid for by their tax dollars. I am left with no other choice than to file this suit to ensure our laws are followed," Mr. DeWine said.

The franchise did not return a call seeking comment by publication time.

AG DeWine was joined in the lawsuit by the city of Columbus.

"Just as importantly, the team plays in a taxpayer-supported facility, and Precourt Sports Ventures and Major League Soccer have accepted financial assistance from the state of Ohio and the City of Columbus. State law provides us with this protection," Mayor Andrew Ginther said.

The lawsuit, filed in Franklin County Common Pleas Court, was the brainchild of Rep. Mike Duffey (R-Worthington). (See Gongwer Ohio Report, December 6, 2017)

"I am very pleased that our state's top law enforcement officer is vigorously enforcing longstanding Ohio law," he said in a statement. "The Crew SC is our team. Our town. Neither the MLS or Precourt Sports Ventures can operate above Ohio law."

### **Planned Upgrades to Give Farmers New Tool in Curbing Phosphorus Runoff**

Upcoming improvements to a key tool could provide farmers with more real-time, actionable data on phosphorus runoff coming from their farms.

Called the Ohio Phosphorus Risk Index, the resource is facilitated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and is soon slated for a host of upgrades that farmers and environmental groups in Ohio say will provide one more asset toward curbing phosphorous runoff.

"The idea is you'll put in real actual data and so you will get really specific information then on how to make use of that data," Ohio Farm Bureau spokesman Joe Cornely said in an interview. "And that's crucial because every farm is different - the soil type, the management practices, the type of nutrients."

The tool is aimed at assisting farmers in gauging their risk for phosphorus runoff. That runoff can degrade surface water quality and contributed to harmful algal blooms.

"Providing farmers with tools to be more efficient and environmentally conscious will help their businesses and their watershed," said Peter Bucher, water resources director for the Ohio Environmental Council. "Further identifying what works best at reducing nutrient runoff will allow more farmers to implement the appropriate practices for their property."

The new index is years in the making and is thanks to a project led by Elizabeth Dayton, a researcher in Ohio State University's College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. The project was funded through a \$1 million USDA Conservation Innovation Grant and \$1 million in matching donations from Ohio farmer groups.

"The index provides a long-term, average estimate of field-scale phosphorus loss based on farmer specific inputs," Ms. Dayton said. "It gives farmers the ability to compare crop management scenarios and evaluate changes in phosphorus runoff, allowing them to prioritize time and resources when making management decisions."

The tool also helps put Ohio's goal to reduce phosphorus levels in Lake Erie by 40% by 2025 within reach, Ms. Dayton said. (See Gongwer Ohio Report, February 13, 2017)

"The index quantifies how voluntary changes in agricultural practices contribute to achieving target phosphorus runoff reduction goals," she added. "If you multiply that by the millions of crop acres in Ohio, the 40% reduction target appears achievable."

Mr. Cornely said solving the issue of phosphorus levels will "take a whole toolbox."

"And this is one more tool to go in that box," he said. "So when you look at this as it's employed in conjunction with other tools - some that exist, some still being in development - this is one good piece of that arsenal we need to fix the problem."

After harmful algal bloom activity in 2017 tied the third worst season on record, the United States Environmental Protection Agency is moving to reconsider whether Lake Erie's western basin should be classified as impaired. (See Gongwer Ohio Report, January 22, 2018)

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency has touted record spending on water quality projects in 2017, although advocates said more resources are needed. (See Gongwer Ohio Report, December 27, 2017)

### **House District 83: Former Nurse, Business Leader Face Off in GOP Primary**

Republican contenders for the 83<sup>rd</sup> House District seat each say they can bring a unique perspective to the General Assembly thanks to their respective expertise in the medical and business fields.

Cheryl Buckland, a member of the Ohio Republican Party's State Central and Executive Committee, and Jon Cross, CEO of the Hardin County Chamber and Business Alliance, are vying to succeed Rep. Robert Sprague (R-Findlay), who is running for state treasurer.

Ms. Buckland, 63, was appointed to the ORP's leadership committee in 2013 and has been elected twice since then. A self-described "non-traditional candidate," she's spent four decades working at skilled nursing facilities, teaching nursing students and operating her own extended care facility.

"We have not had a nurse in the General Assembly since 2010," Ms. Buckland said. "With all due respect, we have a lot of people making healthcare decisions without a healthcare background.... I feel I can be a voice for every healthcare discipline."

Mr. Cross, 38, has a background in commercial real estate. He's held the top job at the Hardin County chamber since 2014 and before that spent several stints dabbling in politics in Kansas, California and Texas. In addition to some northeast Ohio campaigns, he also spent a two-year span as an advance man for then-California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

It's his current role, however, that he says gives him an up close look at Ohio's competitiveness with other states and places him on the front lines of drawing and keeping businesses in the Buckeye State.

"Every day as an economic development director, I'm responsible for helping to attract new businesses to our community and our region and helping existing companies with their current demands," Mr. Cross said. "So I think I bring a unique perspective to understanding what it takes to attract a business to Ohio or keep a business open and successful in Ohio."

When it comes to the forthcoming race for House speaker shaping up between Rep. Ryan Smith (R-Bidwell) and Rep. Larry Householder (R-Glenford), both candidates declined to publicly weigh in at this point.

"Right now that's my focus: the primary," Ms. Buckland said. "I know both the gentlemen and I'm happy to make a declaration of support when that's necessary."

And although he said he's met with both speaker candidates, Mr. Cross echoed that sentiment. "My philosophy has been I have to win my race first," he said.

But there are plenty of other areas in which the candidates remain at odds. Mr. Cross in particular has questioned whether his opponent shares true conservative principles.

"I'm a proud Republican who supports our president," Mr. Cross said. "I'm a strong pro-life advocate. I will do anything I can to help save and protect human life. I don't believe my opponent is."

Ms. Buckland denied any claim that she doesn't support life. Still, she said her medical background has given her the ability to emotionally detach from the issue.

"As a health professional I've been trained to put my personal feelings aside and look at what is in the best interest of the patient," Ms. Buckland said. "When we look at issues that create such an emotional response in people what I can do is come to the table and get pragmatic answers. I support life, I respect death but I'm also very pragmatic and an objective thinker."

Although she supports life in healthcare and abortion-related matters, she also questioned whether politicians have inserted themselves too far into the patient-doctor relationship.

She lists her priorities if elected as advocating for farmers, steering health policy and supporting efforts to curb the opioid epidemic - an issue she saw firsthand through the addiction of her grandson. She described herself as an "out-of-the-box thinker" who can bring a new perspective to the drug fight.

"I know what I know and what I know I know very well but I'm not an expert in everything," Ms. Buckland said. "I would like to be a voice when we look at our

entitlement programs - not unlike the drug crisis - and say are we spending the right dollars in the right places?"

She and her husband sold their extended care facility in 2008, but she said the experience running a business will give her valuable insight to carry into the Statehouse. She said her world travel would also be an asset - including stays in Africa, El Salvador, Russia as well as time spent delivering Polio vaccines in Portugal.

Mr. Cross said his desire to tackle issues from the business perspective easily ties into other pressing challenges facing the state, including workforce development, educational attainment, opioid addiction and adequately funding local communities.

"My largest overarching campaign platform is to make Ohio and the 83<sup>rd</sup> District safer, stronger and open for business," he said. "How do we get better and how do we compete and how do we make sure policies are not driving people, business, education out of the state?"

His experience across the country, he said, showed him a new perspective on where Ohio stands in business friendliness compared to other states. He wants to be a voice for businesses large and small and is a strong defender of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment, he said.

"We want to make sure rural America, rural Ohio, where you have large corporations to family farms, that perspective is brought into the conversation and policy decisions," Mr. Cross said.

Ms. Buckland and her husband, Larry, have seven stepchildren, 15 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren. Among her talents, she lists flamenco and tap dancing.

Mr. Cross, when he's not eating pizza and burgers on the campaign trail, enjoys spending time with his wife, Christina, and playing sports with his two sons, ages 3 and 7.

The winner of the Republican nomination will likely face Democrat Ashley Philipp of McComb who is running unopposed in the primary.

**Subscribers Note:** This story is part of a series focusing on key primary races for Ohio legislative seats. See Gongwer's Election Page for more information on 2018 contests, including our Key Races.

#### Rover OEPA clash over landslides, detected chemical traces

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and Rover Pipeline builders continue to lock horns - this time engaging in a contentious back-and-forth over several land slips posing "serious threat to environmental resources."

The OEPA is also requesting new tests after the presence of a manufactured chemical, tetrachloroethene, was found in some drilling returns in Stark County.

The two issues are the latest battle grounds in the ongoing dispute between the two entities - which is simultaneously playing out in an ongoing court case in Stark County. (See Gongwer Ohio Report, February 5, 2018)

The landslip issue came to the forefront last month when Rover Pipeline LLC requested the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approve temporary workspace for it to repair 28 landslips in Ohio and West Virginia.

But the OEPA, in a subsequent missive to FERC said the company's online filing was the first notice the agency received of the situation and blasted the company for failing to adequately notify the state.

"Ohio EPA is concerned that Rover and FERC did not immediately bring to our attention what Rover now describes as 'a serious threat to sensitive environmental resources,'" OEPA wrote. "Instead of trying to work around Ohio, we again call on Rover to be forthright and provide us with information so we can ensure the environment and citizens are protected."

Rover, meanwhile, argues the state is attempting to besmirch the company in order to gain more leverage in Ohio's ongoing lawsuit. And it accuses state regulators of not fully reading the company's filings in its "haste to cast aspersions."

"Ohio EPA's letter is the latest in a string of baseless claims regarding Rover that attempt to denigrate Rover to advance its own litigation position," Rover's response reads. "Notwithstanding that Ohio EPA does not have jurisdiction in this matter, Rover, on a voluntary basis, has cooperated with Ohio EPA regarding all of its inquiries irrespective of jurisdiction, including on potential impacts from Rover's construction activities."

The OEPA has accused the company of claiming the state has no role in protecting its own environment - an idea the agency called "absurd."

The agency wrote that it "absolutely" expects "to be informed of these troubling threats" and involved in "permitting of any potential impacts to streams and wetlands."

"Moreover, where impacts have occurred, Rover needs to clearly gain our approval of actions to minimize impacts and repair the damage they have done," OEPA added.

The ongoing tiff over those land slips is just one of the conflicts the parties are engaged in. Another dispute arising in recent week centers on the presence of tetrachloroethene or PCE in some drilling fluid returns along the Tuscarawas River.

PCE is a liquid chemical that in high levels is thought to headaches, dizziness, unconsciousness and other effects and it is considered by the government as a potential carcinogen, according to the Ohio Department of Health.

The chemical levels detected in Rover returns registered below the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's regional screening risk level for direct contact, according to the OEPA, but levels clocked in above the screening threshold of soil leaching to groundwater.

As a result, OEPA asked federal regulators to force Rover to conduct additional sampling along with a separate sampling of drilling fluid source water in an effort to pinpoint the PCE's point of origin.

"These additional samples should be taken immediately and the results submitted to our attention for further evaluation," OEPA wrote.

Rover, in turn, argues that PCE is a "prominent contaminant in the environment" and that Ohio has reported multiple instances of detections in the environment in circumstances not affiliated with the project. The company characterized the levels were "minor and non-hazardous."

"Ohio EPA has documented impacts of PCE contamination in the waters of the state and engaged in several initiatives to achieve attainment," Rover said. "Accordingly, Ohio EPA's new-found concerns are as spurious as they are disingenuous."

#### New Member Profile: Rep. McClain Follows in Father's Footsteps

Rep. McClain has worked in business and currently serves as director of finance and customer service for Doc Investments LLC, an online precious metals retailer. The metals retailer was designed to emphasize a low-cost retail model.

"I'm pretty experienced with the changing of what the business market looks like with online retail and some of the opportunities that go along with that," he said.

As state representative, he hopes to focus on policies that will help build small businesses.

Rep. McClain said another important focus for him is on policies that help families. Rep. McClain and his wife have been married for more than 10 years and have three children, ages 2, 4 and 8.

"I'm about Ohio families," he said. "I value the family structure greatly and what that does in setting kids up, and Ohio up, our communities up for greatness."

Promoting families can help communities deal with issues and help each other, he said.

"I want to be an advocate for families taking care of each other, being good stewards of our children and being able to foster environments where people have the resources they need to find the help that they need in their own communities and foster a culture of people helping people," he said.

Rep. McClain said he spends a lot of his time outside of work with his children and family as well as remodeling his house.

He holds a bachelor's degree from Bluffton University and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Findlay.

At Bluffton, Rep. McClain was on the baseball team, playing several positions including shortstop, outfield and pitcher. One summer he traveled Europe with Athletes in Action, a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ. The team played clubs in France, Germany and the Czech Republic, while also doing ministry activities with children and at camps.

"It was almost a barnstorming tour to spread baseball in Europe," he said.

Although he's familiar with the work of the House after seeing his father's experience, Rep. McClain said he hopes to prove himself and find ways to contribute, he said.

"The hat's on my head now and I'm moving forward to do everything I can to be responsive," he said.

**Politics Notebook: Buckeye Institute Highlights Capital Budget 'Pork' | Taylor Picks Up Endorsement | Schiavoni Releases New Ad | Balderson Touts War Chest**

The Buckeye Institute on Monday unveiled its Top 10 Worst Capital Budget Requests of 2018.

All told, the projects highlighted by the Buckeye Institute total more than \$18 million, according to the report.

Among the projects singled out is \$4 million for a Major League Soccer stadium in Cincinnati, \$2.5 million to expand the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and \$5 million for the COSI Connection Corridor.

"If these, and other pork projects in the budget, were funded using local or private dollars, as they should be, Ohio could have at least \$85 million more that it could spend on pressing state priorities, save, or better yet, return to taxpayers," Greg R. Lawson, research fellow at Institute, said in a statement.

Mr. Lawson also lamented the lack of funding for strengthening the state's physical and democratic infrastructure.

"Policymakers should do more to heed our call to focus the capital budget on strengthening Ohio's physical and democratic infrastructure and move away from projects of predominately local interest," he said. "Simply put, it is hard to see how it benefits someone in Youngstown for Cincinnati to get a soccer stadium or how people in Cleveland benefit from renovations to COSI."

**Taylor Endorsement:** Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor on Monday picked up an endorsement in her gubernatorial bid in the form of U.S. Sen. Steve Daines (R-Mont.).

In announcing his endorsement, Mr. Daines said he has known Ms. Taylor's running mate, Nathan Estruth, for many years.

"Lt. Governor Mary Taylor is a conservative who has and will continue to challenge the status quo establishment in Ohio. It is important to elect leaders in states across the country - and especially in the swing state of Ohio - who will fight for a bold conservative agenda alongside the people's representatives in Washington," he said in a statement.

"We need more private sector experience and principled conservatives to tame the over-reach of government at the federal and state levels, and the Mary Taylor/Nathan Estruth ticket are the only ones in either party who bring that for the people of Ohio."

Added Ms. Taylor in a statement: "Senator Daines' support today and over the next 68 days adds to our growing momentum as conservatives across Ohio and the country rally around my campaign as the true conservative in this race."

**New Ad:** Sen. Joe Schiavoni (D-Boardman) is out with a new ad in which he highlights his desire to create opportunities for future generations.

The 30-second spot, "For Them," features Sen. Schiavoni's family, including his two children.

"As a parent, everything you do is for them. The simple lessons, the big decisions, you want them to succeed," he says in the ad. "But you worry - what opportunities will be there for them?"

**Balderson Warchest:** The congressional campaign of Sen. Troy Balderson on Monday announced that it has raised \$300,000 in the eight weeks since the Zanesville Republican officially entered the race.

"This campaign has had non-stop momentum since day one, and I could not be more grateful to the many contributors of this effort," he said in a statement. "So many people from my Senate District and throughout Central Ohio have asked to be a part of our campaign because they know that my conservative record makes me the best candidate to help fix a broken Washington."

#### **Supplemental Agency Calendar**

**Thursday, March 15**

Criminal Sentencing Commission, 31st Fl., 77 S. High St., Columbus, 10 a.m.

#### **Supplemental Event Planner**

**Tuesday, March 6**

Sen. Rob McColley (R-Napoleon) fundraiser, Due Amici, 67 E. Gay Street, Columbus, 11:30 a.m.,  
(Sponsor: \$1,000 | Host: \$500 | Guest: \$350 to Citizens for McColley)

**Wednesday, March 7**

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Ohioans to Stop Execution news conference on clemency hearing, Ladies Gallery, Statehouse,  
Columbus, 10 a.m.

**Monday, March 12**

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Sen. Steve Wilson (R-Maineville) fundraiser, Queen City Club, 331 E. Fourth Street, Cincinnati, 5  
p.m., (Host: \$5,000 | Sponsor: \$2,500 | Supporter: \$1,000 | Attendee: \$500 to Steve Wilson for  
Ohio)

**Tuesday, March 13**

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Rep. Anne Gonzales (R-Westerville) fundraiser, The Keep, 50 W. Broad Street, Columbus, 4:30  
p.m., (Sponsor: \$1,000 | Host: \$500 | Guest: \$350 to Citizens for Anne Gonzales)

Sen. Stephanie Kunze (R-Hilliard) & Rep. Mike Duffey (R-Worthington) fundraiser, Pins Mechanical  
Co., 6558 Riverside Drive, Dublin, 5:30 p.m., (Sponsor: \$1,000 | Host: \$500 | Guest: \$250 to  
Citizens for Stephanie Kunze and/or Citizens for Duffey)

**Wednesday, March 14**

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Sen. Bill Coley (R-Liberty Twp.) fundraiser, Pub Mahone, 31 E. Gay Street, Columbus, 5 p.m.,  
(Sponsor: \$1,000 | Host: \$500 | Guest: \$350 to Friends of Bill Coley)

**Tuesday, March 20**

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Sen. Bob Hackett (R-London) & Sen. Lou Terhar (R-Cincinnati) fundraiser, Athletic Club of  
Columbus - Gold, 136 E. Broad Street, Columbus, 5 p.m., (Sponsor: \$1,000 | Host: \$500 | Guest:  
\$350 to Hackett for Ohio and/or Friends of Lou Terhar)

**Wednesday, March 21**

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Sen. President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) fundraiser, Athletic Club of Columbus - Crystal, 136 E.  
Broad Street, Columbus, 7:30 a.m., (Sponsor: \$2,500 | Host: \$1,000 | Guest: \$500 to Citizens for  
Obhof)

**Tuesday, April 10**

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Sen. Gayle Manning (R-N. Ridgeville) & Sen. Stephanie Kunze (R-Hilliard) fundraiser, Buckeye  
Bourbon House, 36 E. Gay Street, Columbus, 5 p.m., (Sponsor: \$1,000 | Host: \$500 | Guest: \$350  
to Committee to Elect Gayle Manning and/or Citizens for Stephanie Kunze)

**Wednesday, April 11**

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Sen. Bob Peterson (R-Sabina) & Sen. Steve Wilson (R-Maineville) fundraiser, Athletic Club of  
Columbus - Lounge, 136 E. Broad Street, Columbus, 5 p.m., (Sponsor: \$1,000 | Host: \$500 |  
Guest: \$350 to Peterson for Good Government and/or Steve Wilson for Ohio)

**Tuesday, April 17**

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Sen. Scott Oelslager (R-N. Canton) & Sen. Frank Hoagland (R-Adena) fundraiser, Athletic Club of Columbus - 136 E. Broad Street, Columbus, 5 p.m., (Checks to Oelslager for Ohio Committee and/or Hoagland for Ohio)

**Wednesday, April 18**

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Ohio University State Government Alumni Luncheon, Athletic Club, 136 E. Broad St., Columbus, 11:30 a.m., (Social: 11:30 am; Luncheon: 12 pm)

Sen. Jay Hottinger (R-Newark) & Sen. Matt Dolan (R-Chagrin Falls) fundraiser, Pins, 141 N. 4th Street, Columbus, 5 p.m., (Sponsor: \$1,000 | Host: \$500 | Guest: \$350 to Citizens for Hottinger and/or Friends of Matt Dolan)

**Tuesday, April 24**

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Rep. Andy Brenner (R-Powell) fundraiser, Athletic Club of Columbus - Parlor A/B, 136 E. Broad Street, Columbus, 11:30 a.m., (Sponsor: \$1,000 | Host: \$500 | Guest: \$350 to Brenner for Ohio)

Sen. Matt Huffman (R-Lima) & Sen. John Eklund (R-Chardon) fundraiser, Pins, 141 N. 4th Street, Columbus, 5 p.m., (Sponsor: \$1,000 | Host: \$500 | Guest: \$350 to Matt Huffman for Ohio and/or Friends of John Eklund)

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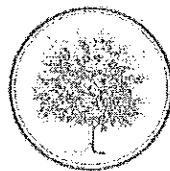
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
March 7, 2018

### **The Buckeye Institute: Ohio's 2018 Capital Budget Riddled with Too Many Special Interest Requests**

*Greg Lawson Testifies Before Ohio Finance Committee on House Bill 529*

**Columbus, OH --** The Buckeye Institute's Greg R. Lawson testified yesterday (see full text below or download a PDF) before the Ohio House Finance Committee on House Bill 529, Ohio's 2018 capital budget.

In opening his testimony, Lawson recognized that in many ways Ohio's capital budget adheres to Buckeye's spending principles, which were outlined in *Principled Spending: Using Ohio's Capital Budget to Benefit Ohioans*. The report "encouraged policymakers to be guided by three spending principles: constrain the growth of government, eliminate corporate and special interest welfare, and focus on strengthening Ohio's physical and democratic infrastructures."

Although policymakers have allocated money to strengthen Ohio's democratic infrastructure in separate legislation, Lawson noted "the capital budget was not then reduced to maintain spending balance-and it should have been."

Of the capital budget overall, Lawson expressed concern "that this budget, like others before, remains riddled with too many special interest requests, local projects, and some potential boondoggles that veer from providing core government services and infrastructure."

In highlighting the special interest projects, Lawson drew special attention to the 10 that made Buckeye's **Top 10 Worst Capital Budget Requests of 2018**, saying, "We highlight more than \$18 million of taxpayer dollars spent on pork projects that benefit only narrow local interests and not broader statewide needs. And that \$18 million is just the tip of the proverbial iceberg. All of the special interest projects combined pushes that total to at least \$85 million. That is at least \$85 million of pork that could be spent on more pressing priorities, saved, or returned to taxpayers."

Lawson went on to say, "Ultimately, of course, local residents and local taxpayers should have every opportunity to voluntarily choose to fund amphitheaters, performance stages, parks, zoos, and even stadiums out of their own local resources. But Cleveland residents should not be compelled-through state taxes-to pay for the Columbus Zoo, nor should Youngstown residents be made to pay for a soccer venue in Cincinnati."

# # #

**Interested Party Testimony on House Bill 529  
Before the Ohio House Finance Committee**

**Greg R. Lawson, Research Fellow  
The Buckeye Institute  
March 6, 2018**

Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Ryan, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding the Capital Budget.

My name is Greg R. Lawson. I am the research fellow at **The Buckeye Institute**, a free-market think tank here in Columbus that advocates for low-tax, low-regulation policies that remove barriers to prosperity for Ohioans.

On February 5, The Buckeye Institute released its report, *Principled Spending: Using Ohio's Capital Budget to Benefit Ohioans*, which outlined ways to keep Ohio's capital budget focused on principled government spending.<sup>[1]</sup> Our report encouraged policymakers to be guided by three spending principles: constrain the growth of government, eliminate corporate and special interest welfare, and focus on strengthening Ohio's physical and democratic infrastructures.

In many ways, Ohio's \$2.62 billion budget adheres to these basic principles, but we are concerned that this budget, like others before, remains riddled with too many special interest requests, local projects, and some potential boondoggles that veer from providing core government services and infrastructure.

The Buckeye Institute has just released its Top 10 Worst Capital Budget Requests of 2018,<sup>[2]</sup> in which we highlight more than \$18 million of taxpayer dollars spent on pork projects that benefit only narrow local interests and not broader state-wide needs. And that \$18 million is just the tip of the proverbial iceberg. All of the special interest projects combined pushes that total to at least \$85 million. That is at least \$85 million of pork that could be spent on more pressing priorities, saved, or returned to taxpayers.

Regrettably, examples of non-essential government spending abound. The \$5 million to build retail and restaurant space at COSI in Columbus-not essential government spending. The \$1 million for orangutan and elephant exhibits at the Columbus Zoo-already subsidized by Franklin County property owners-not essential government spending. The \$800,000 to install splash pads around the state-not essential government spending. And the \$4 million slated for a soccer stadium in Cincinnati-not essential government spending and not likely to live up to the economic hype. As the St. Louis Federal Reserve concluded last year:

Consumers who spend money on sporting events would likely spend the money on other forms of entertainment, which has a similar economic impact. Rather than subsidizing sports stadiums, governments could finance

other projects such as infrastructure or education that have the potential to increase productivity and promote economic growth.[3]

Ultimately, of course, local residents and local taxpayers should have every opportunity to voluntarily choose to fund amphitheaters, performance stages, parks, zoos, and even stadiums out of their own local resources. But Cleveland residents should not be compelled-through state taxes-to pay for the Columbus Zoo, nor should Youngstown residents be made to pay for a soccer venue in Cincinnati.

Then there is the \$400,000 appropriation to build several government-owned broadband networks across the state. As I outlined recently in *Broadband "GON" Wrong*,[4] private-sector players have already deployed billions of dollars developing state-of-the-art technology to nimbly respond to consumer demands and preferences, while these government-owned networks have proven unable to pay for themselves, leaving taxpayers to pay for networks that few consumers even want to use.

That communities are asking for state money in the capital budget indicates that these networks all too frequently fail to live up to the promises made by government officials, and often lead to further taxpayer subsidies to maintain operations.

Many of the other local projects are not inherently misguided, but insofar as they provide only narrow local benefits and do not strengthen Ohio's physical infrastructure, state policymakers should remove them from the capital budget. Those funds should instead be spent on Ohio's pressing needs, such as building and maintaining water and sewer systems, and state roads.

We are also disappointed that this capital budget will not strengthen the state's democratic infrastructure, including, for example, replacing Ohio's aging voting machines. Such funding appears allocated in separate legislation, but the capital budget was not then reduced to maintain spending balance-and it should have been.

Finally, and perhaps most critically, policymakers must remember that a lack of fiscal restraint, even during good economic times, unwittingly creates unrealistic spending expectations over time. Using the capital budget to fund local projects rather than state priorities will only make it harder for policymakers to curb and manage state spending when tough economic times inevitably arrive.

Today, even as the state budget looks solidly in the black, the danger of recession and fiscal instability still lurks. Recall, for instance, how unforeseen challenges required immediate